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CHRISTIANITY

AND

THE IDEAL OF HUMANITY

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FOR

DAVID DOUGLAS

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CHRISTIANITY

AND

THE IDEAL OF HUMANITY

IN OLD TIMES AND NEW

BY

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EDINBURGH

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1893

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
David, King of Israel	1
On Christian Unity	37
Wisdom	75
Women	97
St. Paul and the Epistle to the Romans	133
The Scottish Covenanters . . .	157

I

DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL

I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him.

1 Samuel, xvi. 18.

DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL

Of all the fair chances that can befall a young man at his first start in the race of life, the greatest unquestionably is to be brought into contact, and, if possible, to enter into familiar relations with a truly great man. For this is to know what manhood means, and a manly life, not by grave precept, or wise proverb, or ideal picture; but to see the ideal in complete equipment and compact reality before you, as undeniably and as efficiently as the sun that sheds light from the sky, or the mountain that showers waters into the glen. As when the poor primeval dweller in a cave of the wilderness is for the first time brought into the view of a pillared Greek temple or a massive Florentine palace, he leaps into a new conception of what a human dwelling means, and, stirred with an imitative ambition, proceeds forthwith to shape for himself a miniature of the temple or the palace in the shape of a dainty little cottage, so the young man who first comes into living contact with

a Caesar or an Alexander, a Shakespeare or a Bacon, passes at one step, as it were, from a dream of manhood to the fact of a great personal possibility, or at least of a noble human relationship. He may never hope to become a Caesar in war, or a Shakespeare in literature, but certainly he has become feelingly alive to the kinship which he may claim, and the aspirations which he may indulge. What is a great man? A man is great amongst men, just as Mont Blanc is great among Swiss, or Ben Nevis among Scottish mountains; a man rising above the normal level of his kind, with as marked an elevation as these heights above the common reach of heaven-kissing hills, and at the same time possessing all the qualities and virtues that belong to terrestrial elevations generally. This is a qualification that must be distinctly marked. Mere height will not make a Ben Nevis or a Mont Blanc, and so a mere superiority in any of the special qualities or positions that belong to a man will not make a truly great man. The great man must be a complete man, a man all round, but at the same time a man in his peculiar sphere of the social harmony, presenting to the general eye a superiority as marked as any high Highland Ben does above its lowly congeners. A great genius is not necessarily a great man: he may be a Beethoven in the lordship of sweet sounds, a Raphael in the cunning handling of brush and pencil, a Napoleon in the well-ordered sweep of ambitious war: but not therefore a great man.

Jove is not Jove merely as a strong launcher of the thunderbolt, but as the assertor of justice, the avenger of perjury, and the protector of innocence. Nay, so far is mere special greatness of any description from giving a man claim to the praise of a truly great man, that, as we daily see, there is a strong tendency in the cultivation of any prominent specialty to defraud the other capacities that belong to a well-accoutred human creature, and to disturb the balance of his manhood. Thus it happens that the strong point in a man's professional exercise becomes a weakness in his human character; his favourite virtue, like a pampered child, becomes his prominent weakness; the exaggerated presentment of one feature destroys the fair proportions, in which the beauty of an æsthetical whole consists; and in this way your mere lawyer, for instance, becomes an expert intellectual fencer, your mere poet a blower of splendid soap-bubbles or a colourist of clouds, and your mere parson a bundle of sacerdotal conceit. Let us say, therefore, that a great man is a man who, while in the exercise of his special capacity soaring as high above common men as an eagle above a barn-door fowl, is deficient in no function that makes a man a man. He is in all things essentially and broadly human, and achieves in the exercise of his one special talent the highest excellence, as Shakespeare did in the drama, only by the social atmosphere which he breathes, and the human sympathies which he cultivates.

Next to the actual contact and familiar companionship of such thoroughly-equipped specimens of our common humanity, the most important thing that a young man can do to furnish himself in like manner for his allotted part in the drama of human life, is to make himself minutely and, so to speak, personally acquainted with some of the great men who have headed the movements of the age to which they belonged and stamped their names on its history; names in fact without which all history would be a body without a soul, or a drama without the central figure—the play of Hamlet without the part of Hamlet, if such a thing might be. Such names are Luther and Knox in the history of the Church, and in the political world Nelson and Bismarck. In the Greek and Roman world, of course, there are not a few names, such as Socrates and Plato, Cicero and Caesar, that dominate the epochs to which they belong, as the monumental pillar does the battle-field, or the cathedral the Episcopal province. The Hebrews in like manner, by the superior force of their moral inspiration, have gained for themselves the foremost place in the heroic heraldry of those to whom the world owes its most notable amount of propulsive advance; and among these no doubt the Apostle Paul, at once by the expansiveness, the energy, and the wisdom of his evangelical aggression, will be universally accepted as the head. Happily also we know more of him, both from the general history of the first apostolical preaching

and from his epistles to the particular churches, than we know of any other of that adventurous brotherhood; but there is one man, the most prominent among the heroes of the Old Testament, whom we know more minutely and more familiarly than even St. Paul, and that is King David, whom I have therefore chosen to place before my fellow Scots as the pattern of a truly great man; and not only as an example but as a warning; for as nothing human is perfect, so a great man, like the son of Jesse, may at an unguarded moment, and under peculiar temptations, commit a great sin: a sin so great as might justly have caused his name to be erased from the roll of the truly great of all ages, had he not himself been forward to atone for this ignoble sin by the only act which can work such atonement, a noble repentance.

A single verse from the First Book of Samuel contains a pretty complete indication of the rare union of special gifts and wise conduct with great results which justify us in ranking this son of the Bethlehemite Jew as one of the greatest men that the history of the world can boast.

"Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him."—1 SAM. xvi. 18.

The first point in this delineation is, that,

like our James I. of Scotland, he was a musician, cunning in handling the harp, a stringed instrument, like the harp of our medieval ballad-singers, used by the Hebrews from the earliest times, and specially as the accompaniment of joyful song, whether at the social board or in the sacred service of the temple.[1] And that he was no ordinary proficient in this noble art is evident from the occasions and the circumstances that caused the historian to make special mention of it. Saul, the first king of the united clans of the Hebrews, though a man of gigantic stature and a very proper person to deal an effective blow in the first rank of battle against the Philistines, was a man of uncertain temper, and as ready to fall into fits of sullen despondency as on other occasions he was susceptible of being lifted into the atmosphere of sacred passion at the touch of music from a band of sacred choristers: so much so indeed that it became a proverbial expression among the Jews of his time, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"[2] On one of these occasions of mental depression when an evil spirit troubled him, the moody monarch at the suggestion of his attendants sent for the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite to drive away the bad spirit by the power of the good one voicing forth grace from the sacred harp. That the man thus publicly called to exercise the exorcising power of the musical art, must not only have been a good player on

[1] Gen. iv. 21, xxxi. 27, and Ps. xxxiii. 2.
[2] 1 Sam. xix. 24.

the national instrument, but the man the most distinguished master of the art at that time within the call of the throne, is quite evident, just as our gracious Sovereign at the present hour, when resident in her Highland sojourn on the banks of the Dee, and wishing to recreate her social hours with strains of national melody, calls up only those sweet singers of Scottish and Gaelic song whom the public voice has stamped as singers of first-rate excellence. At the call of the king, of course, the son of the Bethlehemite peasant appeared, and with the cunning touch of a practised hand drove the evil spirit from the heart of the Lord's anointed. From this moment young David stood on a new platform in the eye of all Israel; and as court musician and armour-bearer to the monarch he was in a position to rise to the highest social dignity, if circumstances were favourable to a rising man with wisdom to use them. And this wisdom he certainly had; for he is expressly said to have been "prudent in matters," which means that he combined in his person the generally incompatible qualities that make a great musical genius, a lyrical poet, and a politician. For that he was not merely an accomplished harper, but a sacred poet, the maker of the songs which he sung, is as much a part of the catholic tradition of modern times as the faith which connects the name of Homer with the wrath of Achilles and the wanderings of Ulysses. In reference to the phrase "prudent in matters," which no doubt

refers to public life just as πράγματα does in classical Greek, it is worth while to notice that the Septuagint uses two distinct qualifying words where we have only one; for "prudent" it uses συνετός, which means sensible, wise in matters of public action: but not content with this it adds immediately σοφὸς λόγῳ, wise in discourse—significantly enough; for, if a man is a fool, he is hasty, as the wise man says, to proclaim himself by his words; and though, of course, sound ideas lie at the root of all public action, to a politician above all men it is vitally necessary that he shall know both what to say and what not to say, and always to tune his phrase to the appetite of the moment and the temper of his audience. In the next place, we are told here that David was not merely a musician, a poet, and a statesman, but a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, a great soldier as we say—a profession which, even now in these comparatively peaceful days, presents an ample field for the display of the virtues of honesty and honour, frankness, courage, and self-devotion, which make up the larger half of what the Greeks called ἀνδρεία, or manliness; but a profession in those days of contested claims, as in the medieval manhood of our Highland clanship, absolutely necessary to make a man a good citizen, a noble gentleman, and an influential member of society. What more? The historian adds that he was a man, not indeed like Saul of great stature, but "of a comely person," and more specially in a

previous verse of the chapter, that he was "ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look on." This ruddy, in the Greek πυρρικός and the Hebrew אַדְמוֹנִי, does not mean, I am afraid, as I should have wished, our own Scotch "yellow-haired laddie," but only of a ruddy countenance, cheeks glowing with the fulness of healthy life, as the Hebrew word occurs also in the Song of Solomon, v. 10, where a separate verse is devoted to the dark locks, and the general brightness of the countenance is expressed by λευκὸς καὶ πυρρός, a pleasant interflow of white and red. Probably also the beautiful countenance refers specially to the bright and lively eyes—κάλλος ὀφθαλμῶν, as the Septuagint has it, just as γλαυκῶπις, and other compounds of ὤψ, carry from their root ὄπτομαι a more special reference to the brightness of the eye. Finally, we are told in the concluding touch of this interesting delineation, that the Lord was with him; which is simply a pious Hebrew way of saying that, though he had often to stand on slippery places, and to face no common difficulties, yet in the end he came firm-footed and victorious out of them; as indeed in the general case where an imposing person, original genius, great strength of arm, and great wisdom in affairs are combined, popular favour is sure to greet the start, and substantial success to crown the close of a distinguished career.

To understand in the present case the different stages of this career, we must bear in mind

that when David was born, and in the days of his early boyhood, there was no king in Israel, but, to use the phrase more than once used in the book of Judges, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." What does this mean? Not of course that there was no government, but only that there was no formally constituted and firmly fixed head of the body social to which all the members of the body could look invariably for direction and leadership. In all matters which concerned the general good, this condition of the people was pretty much what we may imagine the state of the Highland clans to have been before they were formed into a nation by Kenneth M'Alpine in the middle of the ninth century; that is to say, a distinctly marked number of tribes or tribal associations acting in common circumstances with perfect independence, but ready to combine together under some leading chief as often as a common interest or an urgent danger should make common action necessary. In the first period of settlement of the seed of Abraham in the promised land, the military character of the conquest, of course, kept the general-in-chief permanently at the head of the invading people, and made him practically a king without the title; this was the position of Joshua, parallel to that of Napoleon in his early Italian campaign before he was publicly acknowledged as the head of the great French empire. But Joshua, though he lived to the extraordinary age of one hundred and ten years, never aspired to the seat of supreme authority so splendidly

assumed by the ambitious Corsican; and after his death we are simply told that the Lord raised up Judges, who delivered the Israelites out of the hand of the hostile peoples whom the sweep of Joshua's sword had not been able to reach. The position and functions of these Judges are not easy in the exact terms of our modern political language to define; but from the position which the invading tribes occupied in the country, and from the details of the narrative, we see clearly the general character of the political situation. So long as no external danger pressed, each of the twelve tribes could manage matters for itself, under the guidance of its local elders, or wise old men of experience such as formed the Spartan γερουσία, the Roman Senatus, and the πρεσβύτεροι of the Early Christian Church, and were naturally called upon to direct and guide the younger and less experienced members of the community. But when Philistines from the south coast, or Moabites from the land side, assumed an aggressive attitude, then the eye of the affiliated tribes was necessarily fixed on some prominent person, whose energy and wisdom could inspire the associated tribes with that unity which in all cases of common action is essential to success. This was the Judge; and in the turbulent times that belonged to an infant settlement in a new country, the position of such a leader of the people was practically that of a king; so much so indeed that after the death of one of the most distinguished of their number, Gideon,

we find that a bold stroke and a bloody stroke was made by one of his sons to turn the personal presidency of the Judge into a hereditary kingship. But this stroke did not succeed; and the blushless monarch, who had for a year and a day raised himself to the highest dignity in Israel by wholesale fratricide, had his own skull smashed ingloriously by a millstone from the hand of a woman.[1] After his death matters went on in the old lines of a popular judgeship, according to the need, without any continuous fixity of tenure till the time of Samuel, who, in the double character of prophet or interpreter of the divine will and supreme magistrate in civil matters, was judge of Israel during the youthhood of David. The tendency to a hereditary exercise of power is so great, that as in the case of Gideon so we read of Samuel, that he made his sons judges over Israel. But these sons proved themselves unworthy of the trust reposed in them by a fond father; they were altogether unfit for the moral attitude that belonged to a good ruler; they ran after filthy lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. So the people who suffered under this abuse of power sought for a cure of the social cancer by dispensing with the government of judges altogether, and adopting, after the fashion of the neighbouring nations, monarchy as the regular and fixed form of government. This rebound from the comparative freedom of the mixed democracy and aristocracy of the judges to the absolute

[1] Judges ix. 2.

power implied in the person of an Oriental monarch, in those times, could not please Samuel, accustomed as he was to act on the principle of suasion rather than of absolute command; so he sought counsel of the Lord, and in obedience to the divine command, laid before the people the price which they must pay for the honour and the show of having a king over them; and the price was this, that they should cease to be free men, and become not only in matters of military discipline, but in the whole range of social and domestic life, the slaves of an absolute master. The fashion of this slavery he sets before them in striking detail; but, like multitudes of men, when possessed by a favourite idea, they refused to hear any contradiction even from a man of such weight and authority as Samuel, crying out, "Nay; but we *will* have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles." And so the kingship was decided; and Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, a mighty man of power, Saul, "a choice young man, and a goodly," as he is described,[1] and a man of an imposing personality, "from his shoulders and upwards, higher than any of the people," was formally anointed and installed as the absolute sovereign of the people of Israel.

We are now in a position clearly to understand how the then state of government in Israel, and the atmosphere of public life, might

[1] 1 Sam. ix. 2.

affect the prospects and mould the fates of an active and enterprising young Bethlehemite such as the son of Jesse. In the first place it is plain that the mere creation of an absolute master could not extinguish the feeling of personal independence and free scope for talent which under the Judges had brought so many distinguished men to the front; and again the new king, having no hereditary band of attendants to give consistency and weight to his great authority, would naturally be anxious to surround himself with whatever of eminent talent and prominent manhood might assert itself among his subjects. On the other hand there was a danger that a new monarch, having no family prestige, and no feelings of inherited loyalty to rest upon, might be more inclined than the successor of a long line of kings to look with suspicion on any rising name that, in the arena of public life, might compete with him successfully for the popular favour, which an untried sovereign is naturally so anxious to gain. Add to this that, as a member of the little tribe of Benjamin, Saul might not only be tempted to bestow undue favour on the members of his own clan, but might readily be tempted to look with jealousy on any signal demonstration of popular regard in favour of a member of a superior tribe. We shall now trace the steps in the progress which raised a humble Bethlehemite shepherd to the fatherhood of a kingdom, which, though small in geographical extent, performed through a line of centuries

a part no less conspicuous in the eye of a catholic-minded history, than the imperial sway of Rome, or the intellectual supremacy of Greece.

Saul had scarcely been seated on the throne when he found himself entangled in a life-long series of wars with his troublesome Phenician neighbours the Philistines, who prevailed so strongly as even to have got hold of the ark of God, and planted it in the high places of their idolatry. This insult to the national religion roused the spirit of a people whose patriotism, like that of our Scottish Covenanters in the days of the Stuarts, was rooted in their piety; and they gathered all their strength together under the headship of Saul to do battle against the idolaters. In those days when every man was a soldier, and no man was accounted a citizen who did not stand up personally with a sword in his hand to defend the rights of the great social family to which he belonged, the father of David, too old himself to take part in the war, sent his eldest sons to fight the national enemy, while the youngest, David, a mere stripling, remained at home to watch his father's sheep. He was sent, however, to the camp one day, with corn and loaves and cheeses for the sustainment of his warrior brothers. When he arrived in the camp he was met with the news that the hostile armies were standing in battle array ready to close, and that as a prelude to the conflict, a gigantic Philistine from Gath, proud of his stature and confident of victory,

had advanced to the front and challenged the Israelites to produce a combatant who would dare to dispute the ground with him. This challenge from such a lofty adversary completely cowed the whole Israelitish host; they retreated and fled; but not willing absolutely to give up all hope, the splendid reward of the special favour of the king and a marriage with the king's daughter was held forth to the man who should come forward as the champion of God, and lay the champion of the idolaters low. This appeal stirred the sleeping soldiership in the breast of the young Bethlehemite shepherd: he advanced into the midst, and in the face of the scoffs and gibes of his jealous elder brother, was led before Saul, and formally named, as the national champion on this momentous occasion. David had had no experience of regular military life; and even the armour, offensive and defensive, which was offered him for the perilous encounter with the gigantic foe, he flung aside, feeling himself more free for the display of his force when handling those weapons with which he had been accustomed to assail the bears and the lions that made a rush upon his father's flock. He moreover trusted in the Lord and in the justice of a cause which planted the one true God and the one moral law against the materialism and sensualism of the idol-worship of the Gentiles. Thus doubly armed, externally with the practised aim of an expert slinger, and internally with the faith in a divine truth, the shepherd boy marched against

the huge armed warrior, and smote him with a stone in the forehead, that he died. Forthwith the Philistines fled, and David, with the exulting bands of his countrymen, entered Jerusalem victorious, with the head of Goliath in his hand.

In this way, at the very first start into public life, the fortune of David, as the phrase goes, was made; and so in one sense, undoubtedly it was: this one cast of the stone from the shepherd's sling had marked him out before the eye of the whole people as the man more worthy to be their king in the next generation than Saul was in the present; and so, as he marched through the admiring crowds, the women came forth to meet him with music and dance, singing loudly, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." True and very true; truly said, but not wisely; not as David himself would have said, or loved to hear; for he was a man who in slippery circumstances never forgot to conduct himself with wisdom and modesty. Nothing more dangerous than to parade the exploits of an humble citizen before the eyes of a jealous sovereign. The jubilant song of the daughters of Israel in praise of the subject woke the jealousy of the over-shadowed monarch: he must reign alone in the eyes and in the hearts of his people; and from that moment the head of the state determined that he would ease himself of the presence of his popular rival, in any way that might conveniently present itself. No doubt he complied with the publicly-declared wish,

and gave to the peasant's son one of his royal daughters in marriage; he also placed him in a situation of high command among his captains; but, though he thus preserved the show of gratitude which he owed to the saviour of the country and the establisher of his own throne, he nevertheless meant, by putting him forward in posts of danger, to get rid of him in a decent way; and, if this should fail, he trusted to his son Jonathan, and the obedient servants who always wait on the wish of an absolute master, to kill him in some fashion that might excite as little public indignation as possible. But in Jonathan he was mistaken; Jonathan loved David, as a true man loves a true; nay more, his soul was knit to David with a love passing the love of women; and the faith of the noble son prevailed for a season to stay the sword of jealousy in the hand of the ignoble sire. But the serpent was scotched only, not killed. Shortly after, on occasion of another triumph over the Philistines, the popularity of the son of Jesse roused into action the old jealousy of the son of Kish; and moved by an evil spirit, when David was playing the harp near him by the wall of the palace, he flung his javelin against him. The javelin missed; but the act was a plain declaration of war against the intended victim. David saw that his life could no longer be safe in the precincts of the palace. He accordingly consulted with his wife Michal, the daughter of the despot, and she with woman's wisdom let him down

secretly from a window; and he sought safety amid the mountains of Naioth in Ramah, where the prophet Samuel, as in the time of the Judges, still held his seat as the recognised interpreter of the divine will, and the dispenser of justice between man and man. In this house of refuge for the moment he was safe; but safe he could not long remain, for in the eye of the law, and the imperious will of the lawgiver, he was an outlaw, and as such forced to live, like our Wallace under the tyrannous sway of the English Edward, wherever he might find shelter. For some years he wandered about from place to place, but not alone. There gathered round him a mixed multitude of people, bound together by a common discontent with the arbitrary government of Saul and a common confidence in the leadership of Saul's most formidable antagonist. The stages of his uncertain movements, in this struggle for existence against the persistent hatred of his great opponent, are given with interesting detail by the sacred historian, but need not be particularly set forth here. Only one thing deserves to be stated with due prominence as illustrating the noble-mindedness, and what in our style we should call the chivalrous character of the future king of Israel; more than once his indefatigable pursuer, in his eager haste to fall upon his victim, from his less intimate knowledge of the mountainous district which he travelled, found himself in a situation which placed him at the mercy of the man whose life with such merciless persistency

he had set himself to take. On one occasion Saul had retired into a cave, in a remote corner of which David and his men were already lodged unseen; and the blood-thirsty monarch stood exposed in such an attitude that his adversary with a single nimble bound might have stabbed him in the back, and rid himself of his murderous pursuit for ever. But David was not the man to obtain a mortal advantage over an enemy in this furtive style. Even had his persecutor been a private individual, with no show of public authority, the brave young shepherd who had marched up to the Giant of Gath openly, and triumphed over him with a sling and a stone, would have scorned to have taken his life secretly with a sudden spring like a cat on a mouse; but the possible victim here was the Lord's anointed, and a religious sanction acted along with personal honour to save the life of his intended murderer. On another occasion the watchfulness of David came suddenly down upon his kingly adversary, when weary with long pursuit through the wilderness of Ziph he had lain down to rest, and was discovered sleeping in the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster.[1] But here again the religious reverence for a royal anointed head interposed to prevent the poor persecuted peasant's son from following the advice of a friend who stood at his right hand, and urged him to seize the opportunity so providentially offered, and smite his cruel persecutor with his own

[1] 1 Sam. xxvi. 7.

spear. "Destroy him not:" said David, "for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" The noble generosity of character to which he owed his life was intimated to Saul in the morning; who immediately exclaimed, as indeed he could scarcely do otherwise, "Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt do great things, and also thou shalt prevail."

We stand now in direct vision of a point in the dramatic story of Saul and David, at which we might have expected that permanent peaceful relations should have been established between the family of Jesse and the family of Kish. But Saul was not a man to be inspired permanently by any motives that could have smothered the natural jealousy of his temper; he could sing like a pious chorister one day, and the next be as bitter as a hissing snake, and as rabid as a barking cur. David had sense enough to know this; and behind all specious displays of courtly favour from the man saw the lurking jealousy of the monarch. He could not be safe in Israel; there was nothing for him but voluntary banishment; and as he had previously had enough of the rough life of a homeless outlaw, he made up his mind to flee permanently into the land of the Philistines. This step was one equally bold and dangerous; and one that plainly required the cunning of the fox to be joined with the bravery of the lion to issue in any favourable result; and David who had behaved so wisely in the court of Saul,

shows here that he was not destitute of the policy which was necessary for dealing safely with the lord of the Philistines. He made a paction with Achish the king that he should give him some remote place in the country to dwell in; and he would behave in such fashion as to be serviceable to the king in the safe-keeping of his frontiers. This offer the king accepted; and David showed his gratitude by a victorious invasion of the Amalekites and other tribes on his southern border who were the common enemies both of the Philistines and of the Jews; and in doing this he managed adroitly to leave an impression on the mind of Achish that he had actually fought against his own countrymen, and might henceforth be trusted as identified with the Philistines. The good understanding thus made apparent between their own monarch and the brave Hebrew fugitive naturally excited murmurs among the Philistine lords; and to appease their jealousy Achish dismissed David, free to seek his own fortune where he could find it anywhere about the southern border. This matter settled, the Philistines proceeded northward to Jezreel; and they were not long there before they showed what stuff they were made of by inflicting on the men of Israel a total defeat, a defeat which the haughty son of Kish felt so severely that he threw himself on his sword and died on the spot; and not only he but his armour-bearer and his three sons fell on the battlefield of Mount Gilboa under the feet of the Philistines; and no one who

knew his temper and had watched his career could be surprised at the result. The man who disowned his best friend, and drove from his presence the staunchest supporter of his crown, deserved to die at the feet of a victorious enemy.

The way now seemed clear for the son of Jesse to mount to the throne of Israel. He had long lived in the eye of the people as the most kingly man of his time; and even Saul, however unwillingly, had felt that God was with him, and that one day at no distant date the son of Jesse would sit on the throne of the son of Kish. But a throne is too tempting a prize to fall into the hands of the worthiest without a contest. Besides his three sons slain at Gilboa, there was a fourth son of Saul, called Ish-bosheth, whose cause was espoused by Abner, the captain of the host, and so what amounted to a civil war broke out and continued for several years; the people of Hebron and the important tribe of Judah declaring for David and formally anointing him as their king, while under the direction of Abner the tribe of Benjamin, and the whole of Israel north of Judah, and the rocky region of Gilead beyond the Jordan, stood up stoutly for Ish-bosheth. Abner was a strong man, and a great name over all Israel; but in spite of his name and his strength the cause of David became stronger and stronger every day, and the cause of Saul weaker and weaker. Add to this that Ish-bosheth, not sufficiently sensible of his dependent position, fell a-quarrelling

with the captain of the host for a certain amatory preference which he laid claim to for one of his father's concubines. This interference Abner resented; and, over and above his personal feeling in the matter of the concubine, was perhaps only too glad to seize on this offence as a pretext for deserting the falling cause of the grandson of Kish altogether. He accordingly did so, and would have remained as faithful a servant to the house of David as he had been to the house of Saul, had not the violence of Joab and others of his indiscriminating partisans made away with Abner and Ish-bosheth in an unknightly fashion that displeased the generous spirit of the son of Jesse. There was now nothing between David and the kingship of the united kingdoms of Judah and Israel but Mephibosheth, a limping boy, who had lost the use of his legs by a fall, and whom in those times no man dreamed of creating king; so the tribes of Israel came to Hebron, and in solemn convention along with Judah anointed David king of the undivided Hebrew people. This notable instalment took place in the middle of the thirtieth year of the peasant's hero son. Seven years had elapsed between this crowning glory and his introductory sway over the tribe of Judah; and he reigned forty years altogether, and died at the normal age of seventy. He stands therefore (taking Solomon at 1015 B.C.) marking a chronological era in the moral history of the human race, in round numbers, about the year 1050 before the Christian era, 300

years before the foundation of Rome, and about 500 years before the establishment of Greek supremacy in the Mediterranean by the battle of Marathon.

Once firmly established on the throne of Israel, David performed all the functions that belong to an absolute sovereign with the most effective energy and the most beneficial results. The first thing that he did was to drive the Jebusites out of their remaining stronghold in Mount Zion; and then all the bordering peoples, from the Philistines on the coast to the Moabites on the south of the Dead Sea, who were most given to disturb the peace of the people of God, were reduced to an attitude of peaceful submission; and not only so, but foreign princes, such as Hiram of Tyre, came forward to show their goodwill to the well-omened young king, and sent cedars, and carpenters, and masons, as the record has it, to build David an house. But David showed himself king in a much more important sphere than the rough field of war, or the deft management of political relations; he was within certain bounds what, in English phrase, we would call the head of the Church; so he set himself to bring the ark of the Lord from its long wanderings among the Philistine spoilers back to its native seat, and settled it finally in the house of David. This grand act of national piety was celebrated in Jerusalem, with the display of music and dance and sacred mirth so congenial to the Hebrew mind, and so unintelligible to the grave and severe

religiosity of our modern Calvinistic churches. No doubt there were some persons in the Hebrew court in those times, among whom Michal, Saul's daughter, is specially named, who thought it undignified in a crowned monarch to clothe himself in a linen ephod, and dance in public procession amid a crowd of priests and priestlings and maid-servants of the common people; but David was a man and a poet, that is, a sympathiser with men, and not a mere crowned monarch, and as such knew that, on whatever courtiers and danglers about the throne may plume themselves, the true dignity as well as the safety of an absolute ruler lies in his readiness to share the innocent joys and pleasures of the meanest of his people—a people whom he desires to look on habitually, not with the stern eye of a master but with the kindly regard of a father. One point more remained to satisfy the ambition of the monarch who, with all his military success, was at bottom more a saint than a soldier; and as such it struck him as an unworthy state of things that while he, the lord of earthly affairs, dwelt in a house of cedar, a splendid palace, the Lord of that lord, and of all the lordships of the world, should dwell within curtains, like a wandering Arab, in a tent. David would build a temple to the Lord in such lofty style that no building in the bounds of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, could compete with it in grandeur. This thought was altogether worthy of the man who carried the Lord's name before him

in all battles, and fought not for his own glory, but for the glory of the great Spirit, to whom all creatures are only servants for the execution of His omnipotent and all-wise will. But however noble the conception, the time was not yet come for its realisation on a worthy scale; and so Nathan the prophet, and spiritual adviser of the king, interposed his veto, reserving the temple for the next generation, as at once a grateful monument to the piety of the father and the most significant expression of the sovereignty of the son.

Thus far we have followed the fate of this truly great man through many stages, from the lowly holder of a shepherd's staff to the mighty wielder of a sovereign's sceptre. The gray morning had been followed by a bright noon; but the sun of his career was not destined to set cloudless. Not only clouds, but storms and tempests and swelling deluges broke with a wild force over his closing years, and changed his brilliant triumph into a doleful tragedy. The two last scenes of his life were a gross personal sin, and a grievous family misfortune. It is impossible to cover with any species of apologetic phrase the true character of the sin of David, in the matter of Bathsheba, as recorded by the impartial historian. That he fixed his lustful eye on the wife of one of his most gallant captains and sent him into the front of battle in a post of danger, that he might get rid of him in such fashion as to avoid the public scandal of living in open

adultery with another man's wife is undeniable. That he made use of his despotic power to get his rival out of the way, was an act in nothing less dishonourable than the conduct of Saul towards himself had once and again been. It has been said that the sins of the saints are the consolation of the sinners; and, if any modern sinner should feel himself moved to seek consolation from the case of a distinguished ancient saint, he could not find a more significant example than in the affair of the son of Jesse with the wife of Uriah the Hittite. It would be wiser, however, in the modern sinner to keep a watchful guard on his own besetting sin, rather than to console himself with a complaisant eye of self-gratulation that he is free from the besetting sin of some sorely-tempted saint in times far away. Every man has his besetting sin; and temperament and circumstance will not unfrequently conspire to lead a great man into the commission of the sin to which he is specially prone. And, though neither temperament nor circumstance should induce the impartial spectator to throw a veil over the blackness of the offence, still, even in the worst cases, a human brother will be willing to take into kindly consideration any plea that may be advanced in extenuation of the offence of a human brother. In extenuation of the sin of David in this affair two things may be said; first, that as a lyrical poet like Robert Burns the psalmist was specially liable to be smitten by the charm of female beauty, and again, it must ever be borne

in mind that as an absolute monarch, in a country where many wives and not a few concubines were looked upon as the natural appendage of a crown, a king might imagine that, by taking into his connubial circle any fair lady, he was raising her social position and throwing open a field for her charms which in a lower station must have been denied her. Add to this, that, so far as appears from the story in this case, the lady did not make any resistance to the advances of the monarch. The monarch was a handsome man, the most popular king and the most notable hero of the hour; possibly also her husband was a soldier, fonder of the broad field of bloody warfare with Moabites, Ammonites, and other habitual enemies of the state, than of the gentle domesticities of the drawing-room and the parlour. Considerations of this kind might readily have passed through the mind of the royal offender when he advanced to the perpetration of his great offence; but no extenuations of this description to a mind naturally noble could act permanently as an opiate to the conscience that watched over an act so essentially ignoble. Nathan the prophet, the king's confidential adviser, with the courage that belongs to the prophet's office, came and openly rebuked the royal offender. At his rebuke the conscience of the sinner started from its temporary torpor. The pious parable of the prophet, with its significant close, "*Thou art the man!*" struck David as with Jove's thunderbolt. He confessed his sin and repented in dust and

ashes; and the God who knows the weakness of human flesh graciously received the penitent.

The other tragic scene that clouded the latter days of the royal hero, was as has been said, his misfortune and not his fault. It is one of the evils of polygamy, that it creates a numerous family less under the influence of the kindly feeling of family devotion than when the fatherhood is less dissipated, and the motherhood more confined. Besides, as history testifies, an elective monarchy, which in the case of David the Hebrew kingship certainly had been, leaves the probabilities of a family succession always more or less incalculable, and the temptation to ambitious scheming and selfish conspiracy becomes greater. Among the sons of David, born while he was still in Hebron, was Absalom, whose mother was Maacah, the daughter of the king of Geshur. Between this man and his elder brother Amnon a quarrel had arisen which ripened to a murderous conclusion. Absalom, in the fashion of that wild age, murdered his brother Amnon as the penalty for the force offered to his sister, and this fratricide in its turn produced a coolness which lasted for three years between the offending son and the offended father. The sin of Amnon no doubt was great; but the brother had no right to take the father's place in exacting so bloody a penalty from a brother. After three years, however, by the intervention of Joab, the king's chief captain, a reconciliation was effected. Absalom came to Jerusalem

and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom. This looked well; but Absalom was essentially a bad boy, and on such boys paternal grace is always bestowed in vain. Absalom had murdered his brother, and now, as the natural sequence to such notable want of family affection, he conspired to dethrone his father. His father was now getting old, and not able probably to be so much in the public eye as a king required to be in those times; so Absalom was glad to be allowed to exercise judicial functions in his father's place. In this capacity he contrived by being more kindly than just sometimes to make himself extremely popular with the people. To this end his extremely handsome personal appearance not a little contributed; for, as Goethe observes, the world is governed by wisdom, authority, and show, and where wisdom is wanting show often comes forward, and by occupying the public eye prevents the lack of the more dominant quality from being felt for a season. Wisdom was not in the compass of a man of Absalom's hasty and violent temper; but with his comely person and gracious manners, he had contrived so to gain the hearts of the people that a strong party of them were willing, from various motives, to follow him in an act of open rebellion against his father. This civil war made a great show at starting, but it could not end well. David, indeed, was forced at the outbreak of such an unnatural revolt to vacate the capital, and pass over the brook

Kidron, and go the way to the wilderness; but the plain justice of his case and the strong arm of Joab in the end prevailed; and in a great hostile encounter Absalom was left hanging on the branches of an old oak tree by those very beautiful locks which he had used as a snare to charm the gaze of the unstable populace. And here the hand of Joab found him and pierced him through and through with three darts: and thus ended, as it well deserved, this unfilial revolt. But the sorrow of the father could not end with the penalty paid by the son; and the cry of David was heard above the shouts of victory, moaning pitifully — "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

The remaining scenes in the varied life drama of the son of Jesse, though free from the double blot of personal guilt and family ingratitude just described, were not altogether such as to recall the early brightness and the noonday glory of his career. No doubt, with the help of his brave men of war, David though now waxing old and faint maintained his ground firmly, and conquered the sons of the giant of Gath in four successive battles against the hereditary enemy of his people. But there was a famine in the land for three years, and after that a pestilence, which cast a dark shade over the latest years of his reign. It is heart-cheering, however, to see the head of the hoary old poet-warrior rising triumphantly

above these multiplied sorrows, and voicing forth with his usual reverential hilarity and grateful piety the soul-stirring strains that in his early youth had charmed the evil spirit out of Saul. "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer: The God of my rock; in Him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my Saviour: He saveth me from violence."[1] And in the last hours of his career, we find him on his death-bed displaying that "prudence in matters" which, even in his early youth, he had known to combine with the fervid emotion of the poet and the stout energy of the soldier. Foreseeing the bitter strife and competition that would naturally arise amongst his sons for the possession of a throne in which there was no fixed order of succession, on the motion of Nathan the prophet, he called the beautiful Bathsheba to his presence, and before his spiritual adviser solemnly named her son Solomon as the successor to the throne. Adonijah, the brother of Absalom, had already with the aid of Joab planted himself before the people for the honour of the imminent vacancy; but the wisdom of Nathan, by which David had always been guided, prevailed; and so with the sanction of the dying monarch, young Solomon was set on King David's mule and rode through the streets of the city in solemn procession, amid piping of pipes and great joy of the people; and at the close of the procession, in a

[1] 2 Sam. xxii. 2.

low part of the city called Gihon, Zadok the priest came forward and solemnly anointed him as King of Israel: and all the people shouted forth GOD SAVE THE KING! There was nothing now to be done but for the dying father to call the hopeful son to his bed and commend him to the keeping of the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in whose service there is safety and in keeping of whose commandments there is great reward. Then David bowed his head and died, and was buried and slept with his fathers in the city of David. But his memory did not sleep with him; and though the earthly kingdom which his prowess had established was shortly afterwards rent in twain, and finally obliged to yield submissively to the sway of Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman dynasties in the East, the spiritual empire which his inspired genius created has lived through the ages in the brotherhood of the Christian Churches, of which it may justly be regarded as the prophecy. The psalms of David, though not all certified as from his Muse, all certainly instinct with his spirit, are sung now, nearly three thousand years after they were composed, over the wide earth, from the Ganges to the Mississippi and from the North Pole to the African cape, wherever the form of a civilised humanity joyfully presents itself; are sung, we say, and will be sung, so long as the multifarious sons of men shall know to own piously a common heavenly Father, and to look loyally in the face of Jesus as the Sun of the moral world,

without whose light and warmth, with all its breadth of outward pomp and grandeur, it would resolve into a chaos of confusion, a battlefield of blood, and a hell of inextinguishable hatred.

II

ON CHRISTIAN UNITY

Μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός;

IS CHRIST DIVIDED?

1 COR. i. 13.

ON CHRISTIAN UNITY

THERE is nothing more certain, whether in the physical or the moral world, than that unity is the indispensable condition of all common action; it is absolutely impossible that any orderly action or definite result should proceed from any number of units, acted upon by any number of forces, without a central dominating ever-present power operating in such a fashion as to make all the units and all the forces co-operate for the production of a calculated end. No battle with permanent results was ever gained without a concerted plan of campaign, proceeding from an authoritative centre of command. The most brilliant single victory, as of the Covenanters at Drumclog, may remain fruitless, if, as at Bothwell Bridge a few months afterwards, it is followed by divided counsels in the leaders of the party; and even the death of a single leader of a party, as of Claverhouse at Killiecrankie, may turn a brilliant victory into a dismal retreat. Specially, in the start of a popular insurrection, or the preaching of a new gospel, unity of

counsel and consistency of procedure are necessary; for in all such movements the conservative power which resists all innovation stands by a firm bond of unity which no succession of dissipated and uncalculated forces can hope to disturb. How then could that strange new moral force, the Christian gospel, hope to conquer the whole world of Roman policy, Greek wisdom, and Jewish sacerdotalism, without such a compact unity of attack as might compensate for its lack of that multitudinous array of banded forces which was the strength of its opponents? Of course, only by the intensity of its own force and the persistent strength with which it was wielded, — a force which, however strong, required to be handled with the certainty of Jupiter's thunderbolt before it could hope to make any impression on the stiff old strongholds of heathenism. And accordingly we find the Apostle Paul, not only in the Epistle to the Corinthians from which our motto is taken, but in the Galatians and in his Epistle to Timothy, for the ordering of church matters in Ephesus, admonishing the Asiatic churches in the strongest terms to beware of the damnable divisions called heresies,[1] which had

[1] It should be particularly noted that the word αἵρεσις is Greek, and as used in the New Testament has a moral rather than a doctrinal significance, and that unreasonable quarrels, spites, and jealousies between different branches of the Church of Christ holding the same creed, are much more heinous in the apostolic sense than any difference on purely doctrinal points, such as that between Unitarians and Trinitarians.

sprung up among themselves; and to the same effect Peter lifts his voice even louder against the false prophets and false teachers who were rising up in their midst, and marring the fair front of the gospel with vices than which heathenism, even in its most beastly character, could present nothing more revolting. To the same purpose Jude speaks in his noble burst of indignation against filthy dreamers who defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Let us, therefore, in the first place, consider what were the special forms of disorderly individualism and private conceit that tended in the earliest stages of Christian life to break up the unity of the Church, and weaken the force of its attack on the common enemy.

Looking at the nature of the case, and the indications not doubtful in the epistolary writings, the unity of the Christian Church in its earliest stage was disturbed by two prominent forms of sectarian division. The first is the appearance within the Church, as we have just noted, of sensualism in the systematic practice of some of the lowest vices over which only the lowest forms of Polytheism could cast a reputable gloss. This abuse, as is evident from the strong language of St. Paul in a familiar chapter of this epistle, arose naturally out of the carnal logic by which certain converts concluded that, being by the grace of the gospel made free from the bonds of the law, they were therefore at liberty to indulge themselves in whatever direction their

dominant passion or unbridled lusts might point. This low form of Christian heresy seems to have shone forth also in modern times, when in the theologic battle between Popish works and Protestant faith it passed under the name of antinomianism. It is, however, so contrary to the genius of Christianity, and plants itself so directly in the teeth of its plainest precepts, that, though a disturbing element in the infancy of the Church, it does not appear to have been able to maintain itself in the form of what might be called a separate sect. The same remark applies to the political perversion of the doctrine of Christian freedom in the form of what, in the language of the present day in this country, we are accustomed to call extreme Radicalism, or the assertion of the Right of the Individual, as we see it in Ireland, to "speak evil of dignities," and refuse obedience to the constitutional laws of the country in which they live; for, though in modern times the Cameronians have gone so far as to make the disownment of the constituted authorities in certain cases a prominent article of their formulated creed, it does not appear that, in the early ages of the Church, any such revolt against submitting to legal authority went beyond the fancy of a few ill-regulated individuals. It was rather an occasional disease within the Church than a formal secession from it. Indeed, so long as apostolic presence and influence remained it is difficult to imagine the religious differ-

ences in the Church taking any definite shape in the fashion of our separate modern churches. They present the type of dissensions within the bosom of a common family, under a common father, rather than that of separate and independent social organisations. The third form of strongly accentuated self-assertion which broke the compact front of the Church in its infant stage was formalism or legalism. This of course came directly from the Jews, of whom the nucleus of the earliest churches was composed; and from St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians it appears to have presented itself here and there in a very formidable shape. But the Jews, who everywhere brought with them the evil repute of having crucified the Head of the Christian Church, were not the men to assert themselves permanently as founders of a distinct Christian body. The differential badge of their nationality—circumcision—coupled, as it was, with a sacred contempt for the uncircumcised, was too glaring a contradiction to the spiritual ideal of the Christian faith to keep its ground beside any congregation of the disciples of Jesus Christ. Those who insisted on circumcision showed plainly that they were Jews in their heart, and had not learned the first postulate of a faith whose religion was of the spirit, not of the letter. For persons so fettered with the dead letter of symbolism it was better that they should remain Jews than ally themselves with an ethical association which started from an absolute ignoring of all such consecration of

mere external rites. As with circumcision, so it fared with Sabbaths, and new moons, and all external observances on which the law had stamped a value, which a purely ethical gospel must by its very nature disown. A Christian in later times might have no objection to the consecration of the first day of the week for spiritual services, with an abstinence from the laborious routine of secular work, but to observe a strict and severe Sabbath observance as an essential part of Christian ethics was contrary to the essential genius of his faith, and could have no place in his creed. To the Jews, therefore, it was relegated, and with the Jews it remained. There was no sect of Sabbatarians within the brotherhood of the Christian Church. It has been reserved for the severe and sour religiosity of certain Presbyterian Churches beyond the Grampians to stamp a special value on a Pharisaic observance of a Sabbath, contrary alike to express passages of Scripture, to common sense, and to the genius of the religion which they profess.

Another point with regard to the unity of the early Christian Churches deserves special notice. There were no disputes about Church government; no claims on the part of the overseers or superintendents — ἐπίσκοποι — of the congregation for a special form of managing Church business, as an essential element in a healthy Christian Church; no sacerdotal contentions about two orders or three, whether the government of the Church was to be democratic, autocratic, or monarchical; all this

was looked upon as outside the organism of an essentially spiritual brotherhood. Some form of government of course was necessary for conducting business in a decent and orderly fashion, and as a matter of fact the form of social existence which the early Church assumed was that which naturally belongs to a brotherly association, democratic; but this, though plainly recognised by the apostle, was recognised as a natural growth of circumstances, not prescribed as a regulative form essential to the constitution of a Christian Church. All that the apostles required was that all things should be done decently and in order, and not fitfully and at random; and for this they found the government by elders or presbyters, already in operation among the Jews,[1] sufficient for all practical purposes. The proof of this, for any person of common sense, stands patent in all passages of the New Testament where the form of Church government is alluded to. Allusions indeed are not many, but where they do occur they contain not the least hint of ecclesiastical differences on the question. Anything like the sacerdotalism of the Hebrews, the ancient Egyptians, and not a few modern Churchmen, nowhere appears. All Christians are a spiritual brotherhood under the headship in heaven of their Divine Founder, and on earth under the fatherly guidance of their natural seniors, elders, presbyters, or overseers (ἐπίσκοποι). For

[1] Levit. iv. 15.

secondary ministration in matters secular connected with the Church, a second order, called deacons, naturally arose. What then of the bishops forming a third or highest order in the early growth of the Church? Did not this new presentation of a spiritual church to the outward world give occasion to a division in the Church, to the creation of a badge of sectarian difference, as we encounter it largely in our modern ecclesiastical organisation? In no wise. This also was a mere natural growth, arising mainly from the aristocratic atmosphere which the political world then breathed, and which prevented both Greece and Rome from offering any points of affiliation with a purely democratic Church; and so the elder or overseer of the principal town in a Christianised district naturally claimed, or rather naturally found conceded to him, a certain superiority in the management of Church affairs, such as belonged in civil matters to the civil governor of the province. Nay more, in later times, when the seat of government was transferred from Rome to Constantinople, the Greek churches in Asia Minor and elsewhere, under the influence of the same secular contagion, found it convenient to concede to the bishop of the great Byzantine metropolis a certain spiritual supremacy, signified to the outward world by the term πατριάρχης, or chief overseer; but, as in the modern English Church, it does not appear that this dignity was anything more than a sort of complimentary acknowledgment, growing up, like

the bishops, out of surrounding circumstances, and could not, as a growth allowed and even demanded by public opinion, give any cause for the creation of a distinct sect. The form of government of the Church general still remained aristocratic. This for the East. In the West a growth of a much more notable kind, a monstrous growth overshadowing and overbearing the principle of brotherhood on which the Church was founded, Popery arose, a purely monarchical form of government, growing, as we have seen so often in civil history, out of a pure democracy. This portentous growth, however natural in the circumstances, as human nature is constituted, could not exist without causing a division and a rupture. No doubt the mere form of monarchical government in the Church is no more essentially anti-Christian than the aristocracy of the Eastern Church; but the check, so necessary in all spheres to the abuse of power, which the Eastern Church found at Constantinople through the long series of the Middle Ages, did not exist in Rome. After the fall of the Western Empire in the latter end of the fifth century, there was no power in the State potent enough to control the tendency to abuse so natural to the head of a priestly aristocracy; and so arose the monstrous claim to sacerdotal infallibility which manifested itself in an open rupture between the Greek Church in the east and the Latin Church in the west; worldly ambition naturally, more than theological differences, made

the gap caused by this rupture more powerfully felt; but there it was, as the history of the Christian Church in the period immediately preceding the taking of Constantinople by the Turks amply proves; there it was, and there it is still, a well-marked biform type of Christian Church order, as distinctly differentiated as any legal or sensualistic separation under the apostolic rebuke of St. Paul in the Corinthian and the Galatian Churches; and were that truly great man and Catholic-hearted Christian to appear in our midst, bearing in his mind the East and West forces of the early Christian Church, once united under his oversight, might he not have ample cause, casting an indignant glance now at the Western pontiff and then at the Eastern patriarch, to exclaim, Is Christ divided? Were you baptised in the name of a Roman high-priest or of a Byzantine patriarch? I thank Heaven that I preached among you no gospel of baptismal waters, whether from Rome or Constantinople, but a new creature.

From this hasty review of the fortunes of the Christian Church in respect of schism, it plainly appears that, for the first 300 years the injunction of the great apostle as to the necessity of unity, at least in the grand outline, was successfully carried out. However strong, and however well justified the language was in which all the apostles from fervid Paul to gentle John denounced the anti-Christian beliefs and functions that were parading themselves in "the latter days," the

result showed that the good ship Church had been enabled to steer through the rocks of those "perilous times" without any great damage. It was not in human nature, however, in the long run, to crush altogether the germs of dissension that lay in the very constitution of so large and miscellaneous a fraternity. One force indeed that worked strongly to preserve unity, in the early ages of the Church, was persecution; for nothing tends more to concentrate the action of a mixed body than the necessity of conspiring to resist an antagonistic force. Of this the strongly emphasised Calvinism of the Scottish Covenanters in their struggle against the Episcopal aggression of the Stuarts gives a striking proof. But before following out in detail the divisions that rent the Church, after the unifying action of heathen persecution had ceased by the conversion of Constantine, we must take care that we understand clearly what unity means. There are two kinds of unity: external, and internal; a unity of spiritual harmony, and a unity of organic presentation; of these the former only is primary and vital, the latter secondary and more connected with the convenient order of business than with the purity and potency of inward grace; insomuch that it is quite easy to conceive a well-marshalled order of forces, acting triumphantly together under some unifying power, but from elements of internal discord falling asunder the moment that unifying force ceases to act. Of this, the dispersion of the Highland clans who fought for

King James so brilliantly at Killiecrankie, above alluded to, by the single accident of the death of their leader, presents a speaking example. We may say, therefore, justly, that the moment the common bond of suffering and martyrdom ceased to act, the tendency to one-sided self-assertion, from which schism arises, would find an open field for its display. And so it did. The external form of unity by bishops, whether acting personally in their own districts, or collectively in general councils, or assemblies of the churches then universally recognised, was carefully preserved; but within this circle a restless soul was working which in the fourth century produced a rank harvest of dissensions and civil war. The form which ecclesiastical individualism took in this first great internal dissension was a rage for metaphysical curiousness, in fixing the type of strictly theological dogma: a rage which received nourishment no less from the subtlety of Greek intellect on the one hand, than from the formalism of Roman law on the other. In this way Christian faith, which, as St. John in his epistles again and again declares, was a matter of faithful service by a loving life to a teacher whose gospel was love, this loving faith was translated into a form of intellectual niceness, in matters often beyond the compass of the finite intellect scientifically to define; and so arose the lamentable schism on nice points of intellectual subtlety known under the name of Trinitarian orthodoxy and Aryan heteredoxy which

took form ultimately in that most damnatory, and in spirit essentially anti-Christian expression of a purely intellectual faith commonly called the Athanasian creed. The stamping of one side of this batch of theological subtleties with the name of Orthodox produced the good result of presenting one unwavering front of Church theology to the outward world, and in the then crude state of religious thought this result was good. But the unity of front thus presented to imperial insolence and crude opinion was bought at a dear price: the price of substituting a blind belief in an intellectual dogma for a living faith in an ethical Saviour. And thus the spiritual unity of the Church, which consists in breathing the atmosphere of an ethical brotherhood, was sacrificed to the conceit of raising up a barrier of metaphysical formalism against all variety of individual conviction. As under an absolute despotism, the Church saved its unity but lost its freedom, in the region of thought its members were not freemen but slaves, not men but puppets. And this tyrannical dogmatism of the churchmen in council assembled, combined with two other causes to bring the Church into an intolerable state of moral as well as intellectual slavery, which had its necessary result in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. These two causes were sacerdotalism and secularity. By being allowed for so many centuries to exercise supreme governmental authority in all Church matters, and being called on as a court of final appeal to settle all questions of

disputed doctrine, the clergy naturally began to look upon themselves as the chosen channels of all divine communications to the human race, and the mysterious conductors of all spiritual agency. They conceited themselves to be practically infallible ; and a good member of a Christian church could no more dare to deny their conclusions than a good citizen may set the law at defiance in matters of civil government. In this way practically personal thinking and personal action in religion became a crime, or at least a superfluity and a danger ; better not to know the law and the prophets directly than to know them with the danger of interpreting them in a sense which might differ from that of the authorised interpreters. Along with this conceit of infallibility, proceeding from the magnification of their sacred functions, came the secular authority, which, in the disintegration of the Western Empire, had accresced to the bishop of the Roman Church. This continuation of supreme power in Church and State in the hands of one person was too much for human nature to wield without oppression. The loving father of a spiritual family thus became the proud head of a secular oligarchy, the most selfish, as Aristotle has it, of all forms of government. The moderate democracy, which was the original form of church organism in the earliest ages, was no longer known, or known only as a masqued form of rebellion against the legitimate authority of the Church; and any expression of personal opinion on religious matters was regarded in the same

light that a watchful police would regard the practice of a druggist who should sell arsenical or other poisons for healthful drugs; and as a gardener who makes a bonfire of the weeds that encumber the ground and prevent the growth of a healthy vegetation, so, whether in London, at Prague, or in Florence, or at St. Andrews, the men who best deserved the name of Christians in their several ages, suffered a more atrocious martyrdom at the hands of their Christian office-bearers than the Christians of the early ages had suffered from their heathen persecutors. This was too much. It looked as if the shepherd of the flock had taken the wolf into partnership, and shared with him the bloody spoil of the fold. To talk of unity in such a case was to talk of the unity of prostration of the best men of a country under the hoof of a lawless invader. A great schism was now necessary. Better to break up the army and desert the service than follow a general who could not distinguish his friends from his foes, and whose plan of campaign was to lead his men to the scaffold of a criminal, and himself to the throne of a usurper. The Reformation came.

The theses placed publicly on the face of the church at Wittemberg in 1517 proclaimed schism, a splitting of the general Christian army into two hostile camps in a fashion that had never been seen before. No doubt its original form was only a protest, but a protest against the authority of centuries in matters of faith, which, as human nature is constituted, could not but lead to an irreconcilable rupture

and a declaration of war. It is not in the nature of things that men, whether taken individually, or massed in a corporate unity, should leap from their throne and demit their authority at the call of any private speculator whose fancy or whose philosophy might lead him to refuse the tribute of loyalty to a generally recognised authority. All power is naturally tenacious of its hold; and especially ecclesiastical power. Religion is the most conservative of all human affections; and the submission of the finite reason to the infinite self-existent Intelligence in which it is rooted, is easily transferred to the finite ministers, office-bearers, and authorised interpreters of the infinite wisdom. So in absolute monarchies loyalty to the supreme head of the State implies loyal acceptance of his will through the mouth of his authorised office-bearers. Rooted thus in the strongest and most radical instincts of the human soul, Popery could not dream of coming to terms with any open contradiction to its authority. As soon might a father renounce authority over his family, or a schoolmaster over the scholars, as an autocratic head of the Church submit to be questioned by a moody monk of the cloister, or a curious student of the university. This was the Papal point of view, and could not be altered. So war ensued; and war on no doubtful issues. To the absolute authority claimed by the sacerdotal council, headed by the Pope, the thoughtful German monk could oppose the

antecedent and unquestioned authority of the great Founder of the Church. Popes might denounce and kings might conspire; but with the *ipsissima verba* of the great Head of the Church handed down in uncorrupted integrity before us, and the speech and action of his evangelistic messengers consentient thereto, such denunciations, whether with crozier or sword in hand, were as ineffective against a solitary Saxon monk as blasts of a stormy gale, or bolts of Jove's irate thunder, to tear up the everlasting mountains by the roots. The BIBLE IS THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS. What could the highest sacerdotal authority in the churches, or the wisest head that ever was crowned with a triple tiara in Rome, say to that? On this issue was war declared; war, which for more than three hundred years has split the originally one Church of Christ into two armies as distinct as east is from the west, as hostile as a cold blast from the north is to a warm breeze from the south; a war which, after three centuries of sacred wrath, still continues, if not so bloody in outward show, as stiff in principle, and as irreconcilable in hatred as in the days when Central Europe was laid waste and trodden under foot of Pope and Kaiser for thirty years, in order that a race of servile mortals might have the privilege of bowing in abject submission before an infallible Head of the Church of Christ in Rome. But one point has been gained; an outward unity of the

Church bought by blood and murder is now impossible. The insolent priest who failed to extirpate independent thinking in an imperious style, sword in hand, must content himself with launching harmless fulminations of damnatory phrase from Rome. In the present day this sort of unity can only raise a smile; and the Bible, the religion of all reasonable Christians, stands written in large letters on the most patent banners of the age.

On the Bible, therefore, we stand; and let us now consider seriously what this means, what it means specially in its relation to that unity which Paul was so anxious to preserve amid the divisions that troubled the early Church. What is the Bible? this is the critical question. It is commonly called a book, as indeed the Greek word *βίβλος*, of which it is only an Anglification, means a book. But this is a very misleading title. It is a collection of books; a small literature, in fact, rather than what we popularly understand by a book; and a literature of very various contents; a collection of memoirs, biographies, moral discourses, and pious hymns of the most miscellaneous description; the furthest possible removed from a detailed summary of laws and rules that could be lightly referred to by any inquirer as a guide to belief and conduct. Here unquestionably, on the very threshold of Protestantism, lies a great difficulty. If the priest is to be shorn of his right to declare the divine law, who is

to be the interpreter? Ay, there's the rub. Every man his own lawyer; what a muddle would that make! If this appears ridiculous in regard to the interpretation of human law, how should it be otherwise in the interpretation of law divine? If there are no authorised interpreters, and if the minds of men are not particularly well fitted for interpreting by unity such a miscellaneous collection of books as the Bible is, the consequence is plain; not only from the miscellaneous, and sometimes heterogeneous, nature of the contents of the book, but from the habit of human beings in forming judgments, to take a part for the whole, and exalt that part into a position incompatible with a fair recognition of the other parts, it seems certain that in private judgment, the shibboleth of Protestantism, there lies the germ of a new sectarianism, a sectarianism which will cause honest readers of the book to say, I am of Luther, and I of Calvin, repeating the exact form of division which caused the great Apostle to call out with such indignation to the Corinthians—Is CHRIST DIVIDED? Did Luther die for you? Were you baptised in the name of Calvin, or of Zwingle, or Arminius? This is a fact which lies now distinctly before us, and which might have been foreseen by any man of common intelligence as the necessary result of the Lutheran protest, and a fact undeniable, which gives to the sacerdotal council in Rome an occasion for a very self-congratulatory boast: you see what you Protestants

have come to; you have broken the sacred unity of the Church in favour of all sorts of private conceits; and there you stand before the world like a set of schoolboys who, having disowned the authority of their master, fall to fighting and closing fists at one another, and rejoicing in all sorts of confusion. This looks very well; but it is a remark as superficial as it is plausible. It makes a boast of maintaining that external unity which, as remarked above, is of no value except as a sort of garden wall to prevent rapacious hands from appropriating the good fruit within; and there can be no doubt that St. Paul would ten thousand times rather have sacrificed all external unity in the Church than see it bound together by chains which implied spiritual slavery, and enforced by the carnal weapons of fire and slaughter. Besides, we must consider that while the attitude of sacerdotal Rome to the Christian people was of a kind so gross, and so contrary to the idea of free fellowship in human souls, the doctrinal differences that separated Calvinists from Lutherans were comparatively trifling and quite compatible with a common agreement in Christianity without priestcraft and with a free Bible, which was the watchword of Protestantism. The sectarianism which sprang from Protestantism arose simply from the weakness of human nature, as we have said, and its tendency to sacrifice the well-balanced survey of a whole to the exaggerated importance of a part. But the common ground of the Bible

was always open with unsectarian catholicity to all; and the more that wonderful book was studied, as it could not but be by all intelligent Protestants, the more would advances be made towards that spiritual unity in the great essentials of Christian belief which is the soul of the true Church, of which all outward forms of Church organism are only the body. Besides, it must always be borne in mind, what all sorts of sects in the social as in the religious world are so apt to forget, that it is not the variety but the hostility of different types that Catholic Christians condemn. Variety is the wealth of the world, no less in the moral than in the physical sphere. No man would wish all pine trees in the forest, or all granite crags on the braes, to be of exactly the same shape; and as little would a fond mother wish to exchange the diversity of feature in each member of her family for a uniform repetition of the maternal or paternal type. As in the family so in the Church. Nature abhors monotony; and the diversity of outward feature that distinguishes the individual members of a family, animated by a common sentiment and kindred tendencies, is a moral beauty in which she glories, not a deformity which she would efface.

Let us now round off this large theme with a hasty glance at the existent sects as they stand before us in the motley variety of attitude and dress which the principles of British freedom tend to evoke rather than to discourage. And first, let us thank Heaven that

we have got rid of the main evil which brought so much discredit on the Christianity of the first two centuries of the Reformation—viz. the unholy alliance of Church and State to suppress by physical force the spontaneity that belongs to the essential nature of an ethical association. King and priest, though they may differ in not a few points, agree in this, they both love power, and they may conspire together, like the right and the left arm, to carry out the will of a common imperious brain. The priest desires the aid of the king to give practical effect to his dogmatic conceit, while, on the other hand, the monarch finds it useful to stamp his civil laws with an aspect of sacredness from the co-operation of the priest; and thus Episcopacy, whether or not it might deserve the compliment paid to it by Charles II., that it is the only religion for a gentleman, certainly in those times proved itself the best religion for a despot. "No bishop, no king," the favourite maxim of his grandfather in regard to political authority, as followed out bravely by his grandson, produced its legitimate fruit in stout old Scotland by filling the prisons with the bodies and staining the moors with the blood of the most devout people in Christendom. But all this has now passed away. The blood of the martyrs, as in old times, has become the seed of the Church. Toleration, since that placard of the thoughtful Saxon monk in 1517, is now the watchword of the time; so much so that even the infallible priesthood of

Rome, which alone is logically entitled to put down dissentient sentiment by force, would not dare to give even the shadow of a practical approval to the principle of rooting out heresy by the sword, to which their faith is both dogmatically and historically committed. So far, therefore, as divisions in the Church have arisen from the forceful interference of the civil power in matters purely spiritual, churches stand on the same basis of freedom that they did in the centuries of their earliest growth. Mahomet, as at once an Arab chief and the founder of a religion, might draw the sword to enforce his monotheistic gospel with perfect consistency. This Christ never did; His kingdom was not of this world; the cup which He mingled was a cup of peace seasoned with love; but the Stuarts in Britain, in conjunction with French and Spanish and German potentates, presented to the acceptance of Christian Europe a draught of hatred seasoned with blood. Toleration triumphed; and what remained as matter of contention among the British Churches affected external matters of social position only, without trenching on the spiritual freedom of the separate Christian associations. One only evil relic of the intolerance of former ages remained to the middle of the present century—viz. in forcing upon the Irish people the recognition of the Episcopal Church of England as the National Church of Ireland. This was a state of things contrary alike to Christian love and wise policy; the Established Church in every coun-

try ought to be the Church of the great historical native people, not that of a minority of strange conquerors, however superior in military strength and governmental intelligence. But this grievance was put an end to by Mr. Gladstone's bill of 1869, and with that the last remains of civil action in the spiritual sphere ceased to blot the fair face of freedom in the British Empire. No doubt the connection between Church and State both in England and Scotland remained; but this was in the main a friendly bond, and connected with only a few points of civil disability destined soon to disappear. Of this destiny the abolition of subscription to tests as a qualification for the exercise of a university function in Scotland may be taken as a sufficient example. But may it not be said, and is it not said by troops of loud speakers, that Establishments altogether are contrary to Christianity, and can never act harmoniously with that spirit of voluntary association out of which the Christian Church arose. This sounds fairly enough in the region of theory, but practically what does it mean? Take the analogy of schools and colleges. So long as the civil government does not interfere in dictating the principle on which sound education depends, the patronage of the State has always been rather sought than avoided; and no one can say that any evil has thence followed to the recipients of State recognition in that sphere. Why should it be different in the Church? So long as the State does not

compose creeds, or impose liturgies, as the Stuarts did in Scotland contrary to the conscientious convictions of the Church, there can be no harm but rather manifest good in the devotion of a certain portion of State funds to the moral service of the Church. But what if certain persons, or considerable bodies of pious people, choose to dissent from the State Church and set up a Church of their own? Well, in this case, if there be any real grievance connected with the Establishment let it be removed, as in fact the exercise of lay patronage over a spiritual body, justly complained of in the Scottish Presbyterian Church, has been removed; but if there is no substantial grievance, and the only thing sought after is the indulgence of political conceits about liberty, equality, fraternity, and other Frenchified imaginations, let all such dissatisfied parties retire from the National Church and pay for their pet ecclesiastical fancies as dainty people do for their physical luxuries.

But whether supported by the State or not, it is notable that the most prominent sectional differences in the face of British Christianity refer more to external organisation or what is called church government than to the doctrines or practice of Christian piety, and practically do not present the aspect of a religious sect so much as of a political party. The differences that divide Episcopalians and Presbyterians and Congregationalists are mainly of this description: with the single exception that an extreme party in the English Church defend

their aristocratic form of government by three orders, not only as the most historical form of conducting church superintendence, but as a special divinely appointed channel for the communication of divine grace to sinful mortals. This is a doctrine, not a mere matter of business; a doctrine which is best characterised in a single word as the remnant of that taint of sacerdotalism which we have noted as the mother of all those rampant demonstrations of priestly insolence against which Martin Luther found it necessary to protest. But letting this extreme faction drop, as a matter belonging more to the conceit of the few than to the creed of the many, we may say broadly that the differential features of the three great divisions of church organisation in Great Britain relate merely to the form of government, or the method of conducting church business with no recognised difference in point of Christian doctrine, and as such each form may rejoice in its peculiar strong point without going to war with its Christian sisters on subsidiary points in no sense vital, or contrary to a sisterly fellowship in the service of a common master. Let the English Church, with its grand show of rectors and bishops and archbishops, be and be held, as Charles II. wished, the church of gentlemen: gentlemen are entitled to their churches as well as to their clubs. Let Presbyterianism, with its democratic parity, its two orders, and its popular parliament, stand as the inheritance of stout Scottish men who saved our national

independence from English aggression at Bannockburn and Drumclog: while the Congregational churches, stamped more distinctly with the same features, fraternise in their administrative form with the political party known as radical or extreme democrats; one cannot fail to see that the differences which divide them have little or nothing to do with those vital sources of contention which stirred up so strongly the apostolic wrath of St. Paul and the terrible denunciations of St. Jude. The liturgical service which in such a marked manner differentiates the English Episcopal Church is a matter rather of aesthetical dress than of religious doctrine, and belongs to a sphere in which churches may wisely borrow from one another without in any way affecting their historical character. Nothing in the past history of the Presbyterian Church justifies the notion that the partial introduction of liturgical form is a departure from her distinctive character; the culture of sacred music, and the extension of her hymnal service, beyond the letter of the Psalms of David, so far from injuring will rather benefit her by adding to her solid worth the attractions of a graceful dress in which she is deficient. In the same way the sister Church besouth the Tweed, will take the best way to strengthen her hold of the great masses of the people, if she can prevail on herself to give more free play to the character of her ministrant priests, by at once relaxing the bonds of her printed liturgies and encouraging that

power of personal appeal in her preachers in which the strength of the Scottish pulpit lies. Whatever be the beauties or the defects of the church service, it must never be forgotten that the strength of a church lies in the moral power of its fervid preaching, not in the sweet echo of its printed liturgies. Here, as in all other fields of human action, the steam of the machine lies not in a dead book but in a living man.

The only other divisive forms in which our British Christianity presents itself, demanding special mention under the general rubric of Christianity, are four—Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, and Unitarians. Of these the last is specifically contrasted with those above enumerated, by its distinctly doctrinal presentment. It is a protest against a universally received article of the Christian creed with regard to the personality of the Saviour, with which the Church could hold no fellowship, and a rupture was unavoidable; but it was by no means such a rupture, and did not produce such an impassable bar as the protest of the Saxon monk planted between the Roman Catholic and all the Protestant Churches. The right of private judgment, which was the watchword of Protestantism, by its very nature bound together by a common bond of intellectual brotherhood all who, from the conscientious study of the original documents, were led to formulate a creed founded on personal conviction rather than on ecclesiastical tradition; and considering the reverential modesty

with which the finite mind ought to approach anything like a metaphysical definition of the Infinite, even the most orthodox adherents to the Trinitarian creed should find it much more easy to shake hands with a Unitarian Protestant than with a dogmatising and anathematising Pope. Christianity certainly does not consist in an intellectual setting forth of the doctrinal points of a speculative theology, but in a moral faith which worketh by love; and the blessed Saviour who spake the pregnant word, "Not they who call me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but they that do the will of my Father who is in heaven;" he surely, with his arms of all-embracing sympathy, would not have cast out any disciple who was willing to sign a creed of three *functions* rather than of three *persons*, in the Divine unity. And most assuredly it is not a curious belief with regard to the person of the messenger, but a free acceptance of the message, that makes a loyal subject in the State and a devout believer in the Church. Mere intellectual orthodox belief in the sentences of the most loudly launched Athanasian formula is perfectly consistent with a lamentable deficiency of the Spirit of Christ, and a triumphant demonstration of the spirit of the Devil.

The Quakers, or, as they prefer to be called, the Friends, are another example of a class of Protestant dissenters whom it would have been practically impossible, even for those who were most delicately sensitive to the evil of schism, to keep from taking up the position of a

separate specially organised body; but this not so much from the repugnant attitude of any special doctrine professed by them as from the prominence given by them to certain oddities in sentiment and worship, which rendered common action impossible. Of all Protestant dissenters, the community of Friends is the most amiable and lovable in practice, but at the same time the most absurd in theory. Quakerism may be best understood from a consideration of the tendency of impassioned humanity to rush from one extreme to its contrary, and overleap the mean term which unites in a well-balanced bond the virtue that belongs to both extremes while it discards the vice. The extreme in which the Quakers found the Christian Church in England was the excess of officialism in the management and of ceremonialism in the service of the Church. To avoid these evils they determined to have no office-bearers doing regular service within their body: all was to be left to the spontaneity of the divinely moved individual: and to sit free from the offence of formal liturgies and heartless confessions they determined to sit dumb. Planting itself in this wise before the practical English world Quakerism, to a sober judgment, could only appear to be sentiment without sense, soul without body, and body without organs. At the same time, with all their oddity, the Friends are not only a most lovable, but a most useful, element in British Society. However unwise the extremes may

be in which they indulge, they lie in a direction which acts practically as a corrective of the opposite extreme to which modern society is most inclined. If they carry their aversion to outward show and display to such an extreme as to invest their bodies in a plain garb, which might have been reputable two centuries ago, but now can only be an exceptional oddity, which makes people stare, they at least escape from a bondage to the vestiary fashion of the hour, which is often as inconsistent with natural grace and personal comfort as with the wise administration of the pocket. But the most useful phase of their pious sentimentalism no doubt lies in their protest against war as an attitude inconsistent with the profession of the gospel of peace; a very useful position to take amongst a population of creatures so prone to hasty strife and hostile collision as human beings are, but nevertheless when laid down absolutely, a principle as dangerous in practice as it is false in theory; for to renounce armed resistance altogether would be to hand over society wholesale to the greed of the rapacious and the force of the violent. It is with war, in a Christian point of view, as with money; it is not money, but the love of money, that Christian ethics denounce as the root of all evil; and it is not noble self-assertive war, the school of true manhood, but the love of war, as the spur of ambition and the sanction of robbery, that a wise canon of Christian ethics should condemn.

For the sect of Baptists, or Anabaptists, or Anti-Baptists, however they may choose to be called, a very few words may suffice. Whether the Church ejected from its fellowship those Christians who had scruples about the lawfulness of infant baptism, or the Baptists refused to share in the brotherhood of Christians infected with the taint of infant baptism, there was no ground for disturbing the unity of the Church on such a secondary point. If the Christian clergy had practised infant baptism for fifteen hundred years without challenge, and felt that this practice had acted with great benefit in Christianising the atmosphere of the Christian family, they were at the same time bound to respect the scruples of those who thought that such an act, having no scriptural authority, might lead to the notion of a ritual virtue in the mere external performance of a rite of pure spiritualistic symbolism, and therefore was sinful. To persons touched with such a nice sensibility the Church should just have said: well there is no harm, we will baptise your child when it is full grown, and then the responsibility will rest with the child, which in our practice rests with the parents. So long as the Church preserved this kindly attitude, the blame of the schism which actually took place could not rest with them; whether it did so or not as a matter of fact I am not prepared to say; but if the blame of a Pharisaic ejection from the Catholic brotherhood on this point did not rest with them, the sin of a contemptuous rejection of offered

brotherhood must rest with the separatists. Anyhow the unity of the Church was disturbed, and Christ appeared divided before the world in a matter altogether secondary where Christian prudence, and a respect for personal convictions, should have smoothed all differences.

We conclude with the Methodists. From them we learn two very useful lessons, and they are these. It is well known that, though the Methodist body now stands as distinctly and as compactly opposed to the Episcopal Church of England as the Congregationalists or the Unitarians, or any other dissenting bodies, John Wesley, the mainspring and organic head of the movement, never to his dying day wished to be other than a loyal-hearted adherent of the English Episcopal Church. What then was the cause of the separation? not doctrine certainly or form of government, but simply a noble passion for an aggressive gospel for which he had no field in the regulated routine of local service in the Established Church. The eighteenth century, both in England and Scotland, was a season of quiescent recoil from the civil and secular convulsions of the seventeenth; and whatever might be its virtues the Church certainly could not boast of any of the impassioned zeal for a high moral ideal by which the Christian Church in past ages had combated and conquered a world that lieth in wickedness. There lies also in the very nature of an Established Church, as a formally fixed

organism of moral service, an aversion to irregular impulses, and a tendency to confine its action within the bounds of a prescribed propriety. This was all very well if the Church could be looked on merely as a sort of school of the higher ethics for adults, in which the evangelical schoolmaster had nothing to do but lead the scholars through an authorised series of sacred lessons, and then dismiss the class; but what of those who did not, or would not, or could not come to school, a class of which there were great multitudes at that time, as indeed there always will be, not only in the slums and dark dens of large towns, but in the streets and byways, wandering loose all over the land? For these the Established Church of the time, with its well-marked parishes, rare old chapels, and nicely intoned liturgies had made no provision; and hundreds and thousands of unclaimed and degraded creatures, with no wisdom but that of the lowest and most material type, were lying at the gate of the vicarage, or the porch of the Episcopal palace, without any evangelist to help or even to dream of helping them. Take the analogy of a well-walled and well-cultivated garden, richly stocked with odoriferous flowers, succulent herbs, and fruitful trees, with nothing wanting to please the eye or gratify the appetite of the most fastidious beholder, all within the enclosure and under the care of a skilful gardener, without fault or failure, as perfect as any field of mortal culture may be; but cast your eye outside, and you behold

nothing all round but a vast stretch of serviceable soil with a rich crop of briars and brambles and wild flowers, but altogether unconscious from year's end to year's end of the spade of the tiller or the scythe of the mower. Even such a face did the great body of Englishmen in neglected regions present to the apostolic eye of John Wesley in the year 1740; but he was not the man to rest content with feeding on the luxury of what had been achieved in the rich field of spiritual gardening by the regular gardeners; he would travel forth from Oxford, as St. Paul did from Jerusalem, and conquer the moral world for Christ as Julius Caesar did the political world for Rome. Such was the heresy of the Methodists; and the great lesson which we learn from it is, that the real heretic against whom St. Paul would have lifted up his voice was not the man whose name now stands at the head of a well-compacted spiritual body of Christian soldiers, but the commander of the regular army, whose blindness to the advance of the enemy caused a loyal officer to desert the ranks and draw the sword for king and country on his own score.

Such is the first lesson that a thoughtful man learns from Methodism, and the second follows close upon it. If, on the one hand, the State Church is justly punished for its laxity by the loss of a large section of natural adherents, on the other hand there is a great gain when the glaring magnitude of her loss leads her to a pious recognition of her offence,

and spurs her to a noble rivalry with her once noble sister, and now honourable opponent. As when a careless boy at school sees the prize which he had deemed his own carried off by a less talented but more diligent fellow-student, his pride is roused, and in a fit of noble self-indignation he girds himself manfully to a public regainment of his proper position in the class, so the English Church of the last century, for a season lamed in her noblest function by the exclusive dominance of a formal propriety in her services, has been stirred into a vigorous display of popular sympathy and apostolic aggressiveness by John Wesley and George Whitfield. And exactly in the same fashion and by the same natural agencies we in Scotland in this last generation have seen the somewhat cold propriety and sober intellectuality of the old moderates of the Established Church stimulated into spiritual zeal, and spurred into apostolic action by the noble contagion of the Free Church. And thus, in the many-sided economy of the divine guidance in the world our vices become our schoolmasters, to bring us back to virtue, and a harmony is achieved in the common action of two divided forces that to the undivided unity was denied.

III

WISDOM

Wisdom is the principal thing: therefore get wisdom: and with thy getting get understanding.

PROVERBS iv. 7.

I speak as unto wise men: judge ye what I say.

1 COR. x. 15.

WISDOM

THERE are not many bad men in the world, that is men with a distinctly marked and strongly accentuated element of badness in their constitution; and in this sense the familiar Greek proverb οἱ πολλοὶ κακοί is certainly not true, though of course it must be borne in mind that κακός in Greek usage often means *worthless*, and specially *cowardly*, and not πονηρός or *vicious*, and in this sense the proverb is unquestionably true that *the many are worthless*, that is, in critical moments and under strong excitement are not much to be relied on. But if, turning our eyes from the ethical to the intellectual world, we should say *Most men are fools*, we should be, if still somewhat uncharitable, certainly a little nearer the truth; for that ignorance, an essential ingredient in folly, is more common among men than positive vice, no man can deny. The wise man, though not a less necessary element of the body social than the good man, is doubtless more rare, and on account of this rarity justly held more in esteem; and not only more rare, as a cairngorm

is more rare than the block of granite out of which it was struck, but in certain circumstances so important that any exuberance of mere goodness cannot compensate for its abuse by the lack of wisdom. In the guidance of human affairs, whether public or private, wisdom is in fact the one thing needful for a great success. Happiness may be attained without it in various shapes and in various relations, but not permanent well-being. It is like the helm in the vessel, or the compass, a part of the vessel, not indeed so vital to the idea of a ship as the sails or the planks or the steam by which it may be driven, but a part without which at any moment sails and planks and steam can only help the helmless bark to rush like a drunken man on its destruction. What may that most influential potency be without which the richest man may be sunk in poverty, and with which the poorest man may in due season become wealthy, a potency without which a man in the flush of healthy manhood may find himself plunged into a mortal disease, and with which even the most noted constitutional weakness may under suitable appliances be so braced up and supplemented, as to perform creditably most of the social services that belong to a constitutionally strong man? Let us enquire.

As in not a few other intellectual operations, the answer to this question will be arrived at most certainly by casting out those cognate forces with which the term in question is apt to be confounded. And first of all Wisdom must

not be confounded with knowledge. It implies knowledge certainly, just as the plan of a building by a good architect implies stones; the stones are the material of which the building is composed, and the architect must know where to find them; but the higher wisdom to use them he gets not from the stones, but from his own constructive genius. So with the materials of life, a man to live at all must have them and know them; but a fool may do this; only the wise man knows *how* to use them. The difference between knowledge and wisdom may be most clearly observed in the process of education at our schools and colleges. As these institutions are practically conducted, and present themselves to the popular eye, they are in the main a training-ground for the acquisition of knowledge; and we judge of the use the scholar has made of his opportunities by the amount of facts and principles previously unknown with which he now shows himself familiar. This result is obtained by a process of testing—a process which, whether in its healthy form as examination, or in its unhealthy excess known as *cram*, is altogether a question of intellectual appropriation. But no man who knows the use of language would mistake this intellectual storing up of manifold facts for wisdom, even if the matters stored up were of the most useful nature, and not, as they sometimes are, altogether useless; for however adapted for wise use they might be, they could no more be mistaken for wisdom

than the plums on a plum-tree could be mistaken for a plum-pudding. And as with the well-crammed schoolboy, so with the thoroughly equipped and minutely accurate scientific man.

A botanist may detail through their minutest differences the specific varieties of all the plants in the meadow, a geologist may from recovered bones reconstruct the skeleton of all the monsters that walked the earth, or swam through the flood thousands of thousands of years before Adam showed his face in Paradise, and an astronomer tell you, to the smallest figure, how many days it would take you in an aerial railway at express speed to shoot through our midnight atmosphere, and pay a visit to the man in the moon, or the lady in the sun; yet none of these miracle workers in the field of science might have the slightest claïm to the title of wise. Under the same category falls the sort of knowledge concerned mainly with books, called learning or scholarship, which, as it is by its very nature removed from all direct contact with living reality, may even more readily than pure science leave its possessor to be classified with fools; for your scientific man, however confined his sphere of research may be, has at all events to do with proved facts which, so far as they go, may serve as material for some constructive wisdom: but your learned man, your mere scholar, deals only in wandering echoes, and photographic scraps, of other people's wisdom, of which no craft of mere bookish lore can teach him to make a wise use.

His brain, in fact, is like a casket of curious relics of some great saint, the possession of which, however valuable, has no virtue to make a man a saint. And, if this is the account of the mere scholar, at most a retailer of other people's wisdom without any wisdom of his own, the position of the mere linguist is even more blank. The saying attributed to the Emperor Charles that the man who knows three languages is three times a man, is only true on the understanding that they are known to be used, and actually are used in the living converse of man with man, in the atmosphere, and under the influences to which the several forms of human speech belong; otherwise a score of languages, however thoroughly studied merely as languages, are like so many tools in the hands of a bungling workman, who may cut his own finger with the first one that he handles, sooner than he will make any presentable piece of work with the whole array. Nay, so far is mere knowledge from being identical with wisdom that I can easily imagine a strong systematic intellect, quite Aristotelian in its comprehensiveness, putting a whole encylopaedia of omnigenous things knowable into literary shape, without having the slightest tincture in his character of what we understand by wisdom.

Another cognate term with which, however, Wisdom is more often contrasted than compared is Love. No doubt love is an essential ingredient of wisdom, nay, in a certain sense, may be spoken of as identical with it; as when

St. Paul, for instance, says πλήρωμα νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη, love is the fulfilling of the law,[1] a maxim which is unquestionably true in the connection in which the wise Apostle uses it. He is throughout contrasting it with knowledge: "knowledge puffeth up, but charity, *i.e.* love, edifieth"; but, to put forth this edifying power, love is always supposed to act under the conduct and regulation of the specific element which differentiates wisdom from all displays of mere emotional force, however noble. The ἀγάπη, or kindly human sympathy, of which the evangelic teacher talks in this passage, must be carefully distinguished from all manifestations of Ἔρως, or mere amatory passion, such as prevails all over the world, and especially with young people; an emotion so far from being identical with wisdom that it is one of the most frequent inspirers of those tragic stories which disturb the harmony of domestic life, and furnish an ever-varied theme for the stirring pages of the last new novel. Love in this sense has no more connection with wisdom than a dancer has or a racer, when the dancer or the racer is blind; the blind dancer may trip it over a precipice and be dashed to pieces; the blind racer may race into a deep pool and be drowned. But even in the spiritual use of the word, the ἀγάπη of the Apostle is not without danger, if divorced from reason, and acknowledging no control from the regulative power of the vital machinery to which it belongs; a control

[1] Rom. xiii. 10.

without which, like a mettlesome steed, it may rush reinless into ruin, even as the fire which makes a comfortable room, when over-stimulated by combustible material, may spread with a devastating despotism, and wrap the whole house in a consuming flame. Worse even than this, a one-sided and imperious love may generate its opposite, a hatred which mows down with aggressive hostility anything that does not acknowledge the supremacy of its force. What I love with supreme devotion is the only good; this claims all my service and all my worship; and whatever is contrary to it is of the devil, and I hate it with a perfect hatred. This is the sort of love, the reverse equally of true apostolic love and of philosophic wisdom, which has turned so often the great family inheritance of our Christian churches into fields of acrimonious contention, and planted Christendom with engines of torture instead of trophies of triumph.

Another moral force with which wisdom requires to be compared and contrasted is that which is the shaping soul of what is generally called religion, viz. reverence. There can be no doubt here also, as in the case of love, that it is a force at once of the most intense potency, and the most far-reaching significance in the constitution of human society. If love is a power without which it is impossible to conceive any large social wisdom, binding any loose collection of moral beings into a compact body, reverence, or the loyal acknowledgment of the

less to the greater and the inferior to the superior members of an association of energising creatures, is an emotion without which willing obedience, so necessary for conjoint action, will be looked for in vain. Every man in such case will be thinking only of the imaginary importance of his own petty self, and his habitual temper will be rather to disown than to accept the headship of his natural leader. Beyond the humble range of common social relations, and taking within its loyal acknowledgment the complex economy of the universe, this virtue rises into the sublime under the name of religion, and in such connection may well be designated in all normally constituted communities as the key-stone of the social arch. As the presence on the field of warfare of a great commander—a Wellington or a Napoleon—acts as a constant centre of radiating force to ensure the order, direct the movements, and stimulate the courage of the common soldier, so the faith in the one supreme shaping Reason, the λόγος of St. John,[1] which gives order to the movements and a pattern to the tissue of a complex organism, adds a dignity to the character and a firmness to the growth of social ethics in all its varying forms from a world-wide empire to a remote province or a small domestic circle. In fact,

[1] In our version (John i. 1) λόγος is translated *word*; but the Greek word means not only *verbum*, the spoken word, but reasonable discourse, or reason. To this our English word *logic* bears striking testimony.

no man can properly estimate his own place in the world without a profound reverence for the soul of the mighty whole of which he is a part; and in this view it is no exaggeration to say that, while an irreligious man is either a very deficient creature or a conceited fool, a woman, as constitutionally belonging to the more emotional sex, without piety to the supreme Author of her being, is a monster. Of this dominating influence of reverence in the formation of a truly noble character, all great thinkers, from Plato and Socrates downwards to Shakespeare and Goethe, are living illustrations. Goethe, in particular, in a well-known passage of *Wilhelm Meister*, in taking the value of different virtues in the formation of character, and as exhibited in the differential features of the different religions of the world, assigns to *Achtung*, or reverential respect, the supreme position as a measure whereby to test the comparative excellence of a character or a religion. A man, he says, may be a very clever fellow in many departments, without reverence, but he never can attain to real greatness; and in comparing the different forms of religion that have prevailed in various stages of social development, his teaching is that, while the lowest form of religion in the lowest savage tribes is always capable of lifting up reverential hands to the source of all life, and a more advanced form of social piety can teach a man to respect his equal and place him on a platform of social dignity with himself, Christianity alone has

made reverence for our inferiors a distinctive mark both of her doctrine and of her practice.

But, though all this is most certainly true, it is no less certain that, of all forms of human emotional expression, there is none which is so prone as religion to assume bastard forms and strange dresses, the farthest possible removed from anything that deserves the name of wisdom. Of this deviation from a reasonable type, what a German thinker calls caricatures of the Holiest, the causes are obvious. First there comes the immense distance, in the case of religious reverence, between the reverential worshipper and the object of his worship. As in the case of a huge mountain, the greater the height and the greater the distance from the observer's eye the greater the danger of error in the estimate of its height, and the greater the probability that any definite measurement may not be attempted, and the contemplative faculty of the spectator be lost in misty imagination and unlimited admiration. Our limited human reason, quite at home when measuring an enclosed area or a definite distance, wanders with wildered gaze before the panorama of the infinite, and the arm of judgment is paralysed. And this is no doubt quite natural and healthy so far. "Lord, mine eyes are not lofty, nor my heart haughty: nor do I seek to intermeddle with things too high for me: my heart is even as a weaned child,"[1] are the wise words of one of the wisest utterances

[1] Psalm cxxxi. 1, 2.

of an old Hebrew psalmist; but though the eye should be modest that scans infinity, there is here also indicated a limit beyond which a sane exercise of a human faculty cannot exist. A wise eye must beware of illusions; but it must not allow itself to be altogether blinded by the sharp arrows of divine light, or the floating swathes of supersensuous mist. The reverence paid by a reasonable creature to the author of all reason must ever be reasonable; the abnegation of all reason can never be the postulate on which a reasonable theology is founded. And yet this intellectual blindness is so natural to many minds, that even in the most rational creeds articles will stand in a position of doctrinal acceptance which, if brought into the field of common action in common matters, would be laughed at as pure nonsense. Nay even mere phrases will sometimes obtain currency in the religious world which, when closely looked into, have no more meaning than a soap-bubble has bones. Closely akin to the abnegation of all reason in theological thinking is the exact contrary of it; the self-confident intrusion of the limited intellect into the region of the unlimited, of which unlimited nonsense is the natural result. This vice showed itself at an early period in the history of the Christian Church, and gave rise to a lamentable chain of dogmatic distinctions and denunciations which the Founder of our religion would no doubt have condemned as severely as he did the formalism of the Scribes and Pharisees

had these sacerdotal decrees presented their savage faces to his direct regard. To my feeling, the intolerance of this sort of scholastic dogmatism in Christian theology is more repugnant than many of the most unreasoned forms of vulgar superstition; for a childish fancy in matters above human measurement is often more natural and less dangerous than a rash intrusion and a peremptory decision. These considerations will be sufficient to show how reverence, which is the root of all the highest wisdom, should in the case of popular religious creeds have become a common house of refuge, so to speak, for all sorts of folly; insomuch that, as Cicero said in reference to the transcendental metaphysics of some of the Greek philosophers, *Nihil est tam absurdum quod non dixerit aliquis philosophorum*, so we may in all sobriety say *Nihil est tam absurdum quod non crediderit aliquis religiosorum.* There is nothing so absurd as not to have found a place in the creed of some sect of religionists.

There are other two fields of the manifestation of human energies which must be distinctly marked out, in order by way of specific differentiation to mark their relation to wisdom. Action, no doubt, and fruitful energy are in the general case essential to true wisdom; but mere action and pure energy, independently of the spirit by which it is inspired, can no more be taken as evidence of wisdom than mere blows and bloodshed in a stiff battle can stand as a test of a well-ordered campaign, or a patriotic cause. What is required for notable

results in the field of mere action, is simply an accurate knowledge of materials and circumstances, a clear vision of how to use them for the attainment of certain ends, and a firm will and a persevering patience to work them up to a definite result. Your clever man of business, of which type Glasgow and Liverpool can produce any amount, your dexterous pleader and well-balanced judge, the boast of Edinburgh, and your political tactician, whose wordy strife stirs the heart of the people and fills the columns of the newspapers; these are all clever fellows, and do good work in their sphere, but they are not therefore wise men. The work which they do is special, and may serve the purpose of wisdom as servants serve the call of their masters. But the end which each proposes, the τέλος or final result of their action is only a subservient end, which has no value in itself. The τέλος of the Glasgow or Liverpool merchant is money; that gained, he has reaped the fruit of his action; how to use the money when made is an altogether different affair, and has no more relation to the use made of it than the crude stones in a quarry have to do with the scheme of the building into which the architect has to fit them. In the same way the eloquence of the lawyer is a mere step in the way of the adjustment of right and wrong between persons with whom the lawyer has specially to do. The cases of the antagonist parties are well stated and the judgment justly given; the points of the decision on both sides are given like two loaded pistols into the hand of the judge; but

with the practical merits of the case, whether in the motives from which the quarrel started, or the results in which it may issue, with the wisdom or folly of the whole business, whether right or wrong in the nexus of social things, the lawyer, whether pleader or judge, has nothing to do. The one is *functus officio* the moment he has stated his case, the other when he has delivered his decision. Similarly the politician: he is a clever fellow when he manages so cunningly and so patiently as to get his party in at a general election and put his antagonist out. Of wisdom in this case there can be no question. Not the wisest statesman of the candidates, but the man who knows best how to feel the pulse, to smooth the fret, and to spur the hopes of the moment, will gain the popular vote and be installed in the seat of legislation, as a representative not of the people, it may be, or their best interest, as of a wise Minerva in the upper regions at the right hand of Jove, but of the party and the special favour and prejudice of a particular locality.

Another category with which wisdom may often have something to do, but under which in the general cause it cannot be subsumed, is Beauty. The great German poet-philosopher among his many wise sentences, has this with regard to government: "The world is governed by wisdom, by authority, and by show." Now by show of course is meant, not an ugly and repulsive but an attractive and engaging show, and this means the beautiful; and there cannot be the slightest doubt, that though beauty is

only an outside thing, and in no wise implying anything substantial inside, it is a most potent element in influencing the judgments of mankind. One plain advantage it has: it is seen; it forces itself on the observation; it cannot be avoided; it acts on the most shallow as well as on the most profound spectator, and like the sunbeam, wherever it shows itself, is felt. True wisdom, therefore, though it can often manifest its princely power without the aid of Beauty, will never despise it. If it is only as Aristotle has it, the best introduction, not only a wise man but every man of common sense will desire to have the advantage of it. But what wisdom has specially to look to under this head is that the beauty which is displayed to captivate the eyes of men shall be a true beauty, not a false one; a beauty not flung forth, like a well-made fly to catch a fish, but like a rich blossom to prophesy a luscious fruit. With lies or false show of any kind wisdom can have no alliance. Poetry itself, the most cunning expression of the most brilliant genius, without a root of sterling truth, is only a soap-bubble, or a glorified mist. We live in a real world where nothing but reality can stand.

What then is wisdom? After we have discarded all these false shows or imperfect contributions, what remains? Let us try. I formulate it as follows.

The root of all wisdom is the knowledge in a reasonable being of the capacities that belong to him as a social worker, and of the sphere and circumstances in which these capacities

are to display themselves; and the fruit from such root is a life in a well-ordered harmony with the system of things to which the being belongs; or, more shortly, wisdom is the living harmony of truth, love, and graceful display in the conduct of life, as part of a divinely constituted order of things in a world essentially harmonious and essentially social.

If this definition is true, the first thing that a youth ambitious of achieving a wise life has to do is to set himself to act out the old Socratic maxim γνῶθι σεαυτόν, know thyself; and the how to do this to those who are serious in the business is plain enough. Look with one eye into your own souls, and with the other into your nearest environment, and TRY. If you are worth anything as a liver in God's working world, you must put forth your arms and legs, and use them. You will thus find what you can best do, and your faculty of doing will grow strong by the exercise. If there are level fields before you, learn to march and run on them; if there are high mountains, climb them; if there are leaping torrents, leap with them; if there are deep floods, swim through them. And remember that you are a social being, destined to live not with yourself or for yourself but with and for others. Therefore, if there be golfing ground, for instance, in your vicinity, learn to strike a well-calculated ball in honest rivalry or fellowship with your brother players; so with lawn-tennis, or cricket, or any other sport which makes a young fellow both alert and strong, and besides gives him an abundant

supply of the breath of life, which is fresh air, and sets in motion the fanners of life, which is the free play of lungs, or the breathers, πνεύμονες as they are significantly called in Greek. Of course I do not mean to say that all young men are equally well constituted for excellence in all athletic sports; but I do say that some part taken regularly in such sport is consonant with Nature and beneficial for health; and health of body is the one sure foundation for a well-ordered and comfortable life. The house no doubt is not for the foundation, but the foundation for the house; nevertheless without a sure foundation the best house will fall. For self-knowledge looking inward is of course necessary; and to looking inward a certain amount of solitary meditation belongs; but studious young men should beware of conversing too much with themselves or with mere books; for not only is the field of active energy curtailed and cramped by this one-sided inwardness, but the balance of our complex frame is disturbed, and the health of the premature student irrecoverably injured. Then for your circumstances. These you cannot make, and only within a very limited range can choose. Learn therefore the grand practical rule not to look abroad always, as if far birds only could have fair feathers; but before all learn to lay hold with a kindly touch on what is nearest you, and to take things, as Thales said, by the handle, and not by the blade. Every rose has its thorn; but only the hasty fool, in plucking the rose, lets the thorn dart

into his finger and he bleeds. A young man choosing his profession has of course to consult his capacity and his inclination; but let him beware of the double danger, on the one hand of painting his prospective favourite sphere of action in rose colour, and on the other hand of seeing only clouds and darkness in some less attractive region. There are few mountains so pleasant when you stand on them as they are when looked on in the glowing distance; and few habitations as uncomfortable and small as you paint them from some unkindly external aspect. I knew a young man, who would listen to no advice from his parents, but he would be a sailor, and span the seas in a ship to the far east end of the world; he sailed to China, and in a year he came back, firmly resolved to have nothing more to do with sea or seamanship. His father was an attorney, and he was an expert talker, so he became a barrister; his father and his dexterous tongue-fence amply supplied him with business; and in a few years, instead of a roving explorer of distant oceans, he became a sedentary sage, wearing a horse-hair wig, and sitting soberly day after day in the seat of judgment. So it is not seldom in the choice of a profession. The juvenile instinct may point right, but it points only to a part of the business; it is not a compass to measure all the winds that blow either inside or outside the soul. The great thing needful for the wise use of circumstances, is to practise the art of seeing the best side of all things, and to make the best use of them.

Even within the narrow bars of a cage birds learn to live happily and to sing.

So then wisdom is merely a sort of healthily and skilfully applied intelligence, intelligence applied to the field of social action. I use the word intelligence here specifically to differentiate wisdom from mere knowledge as stated above: for the intelligence of a reasonable agent in this reasonable world can never be skilfully applied except in that atmosphere of reverence and love that belongs to all common action, under a common head, and with a band of common fellow-workers. In this way wisdom, though, as we have shown above, it is identical neither with knowledge nor with religion nor with love, is the product of the harmonious action of all the three, in a world of which all the parts hang as necessarily together as the notes in a harmony of Beethoven or Mozart; just as a rose or a lily is neither soil, nor seed, nor sunshine, nor rain, but the combined action of all the four. "Be a whole man to one thing at one time," is an admirable maxim of the wise Chancellor Thurlow as against loose handling and superficial work; but, while the task is undivided, let it be a whole man that is applied to it; not merely the discriminating glance and the dexterous touch, but "body, soul, and spirit," as the Scripture has it, a complete and compact humanity, for some human end ultimately, not merely a professional gain.

Another caution that must not be lost sight of in all fields of concentrated action, is that

which lies in the familiar law of all practical matters so fully illustrated by Aristotle, that all virtue and all excellence of every kind is the middle term between two extremes. Thus courage is the mean between the deficiency of cowardice on the one hand, and the excess of rash daring on the other. It is with a wise life as with good horsemanship; the steed at one moment may require the lash, at another the rein; but as, on the one hand, a persistent and intemperate lash may spur the beast into a fury which may both exhaust its strength and endanger your life, so on the other a constant withholding of the lash will foster a lazy dulness which may turn a useful servant into a useless incumbrance. Whatever you do, therefore, do it by all means fervidly and forcibly; but do it also, as St. Paul says, decently and in order, which means with measure and moderation. Only with this measured calmness of healthy force can a man of creative energy in any sphere of action assert himself, not as the slave, but as the lord of his inspiration. The force that cannot restrain itself is only a spasmodic explosion, eager to conceal a fundamental weakness under the mask of a momentary strength. This is not the fashion in which strong keels plough the billow or strong ploughs part the glebe.

IV

WOMEN

THEIR PLACE AND FUNCTION IN THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.

JUDGES, iv. 4.

Let your women keep silence in the churches.

1 COR. xiv. 34.

WOMEN

We live in times, since the French Revolution of 1789, of large discussion and general inquiry, when nothing is accepted on the mere guarantee of past tradition, and even the deeply-rooted foundations of social existence are rudely shaken, and we are called upon to defend their existence, not only on the historical ground that they always have been, but in the forum of logical argument and in the region of reasonable possibilities. Of these questions, not the least important certainly is that of the place and function of women in the social economy, one party content to think, with an ancient Greek of high authority, that women are then best when they are least known and least talked about in public life,[1] another with revolutionary fervour contending that to restrict a woman to the narrow sphere of domestic duty is to lower her from her

[1] Thucydides in Plutarch, *De virtutibus mulierum*, preface.

proper place as the companion into the position of a fair attendant on the majesty of the man. In this discourse we shall endeavour to sift the claims of these contending parties, and show how an adjustment of these claims may be made in a fashion that should satisfy the reasonable advocates of both parties, and give offence only to the unreasonables, in whose minds the violence of party warfare has succeeded in giving the death-blow to sober judgment.

One thing to start with is plain, that a woman to look upon is as different from a man as a birch tree from an oak, or a soft green bank from a stout stony brae. This observation of course belongs only to the outside; but it stands not with reason, as displayed in the artistic array of significant things in the universe, that two creatures of such diverse presentment should internally be identical in constitution, and fitted exactly for the same sphere. They are like no doubt in general aspect, and fall under one generic designation, but they are also very unlike; as unlike as a bare Scotch house of Aberdeen granite is to a trim Surrey cottage of brick and wood and richly decorated with ivy and jessamine and all sorts of dainty evergreens: very unlike certainly, but they are both houses, and both afford excellent shelter to food-eating mortals. Or, to take the simile of the birch tree and the oak: here the parallel and the contrast betwixt the physical and the moral world stands complete. In the birch

tree we have all the beauty and the grace that belong to the woman, in the oak all the strength and roughness that characterise the man. We start, therefore, from this fact, as from a firm postulate: variety and contrast in like things is part of the essential constitution of the universe; and to act in any way against this is to make vain war against Nature, and to set your narrow private conceit against the catholic wisdom of the great primal Reason that makes the world a world.

Let us now distinguish carefully; for, as the proverb has it, *Omne simile claudicat*, all similes limp. And though the birch may stand for a lady and the oak for a man, in virtue of the unity of conception, which belongs to the creative λόγος, yet this Divine Reason presents itself on four stages or platforms occupied by types of creation, of which the lower is inseparably sundered from that which stands immediately above. The four types are ROCK, PLANT, ANIMAL, MAN. Of the rock or underlying groundwork, the most perfect form is the crystal, a most beautiful and bright consummation of rocky existence, as one may see in the golden light of the cairngorm and other precious stones. But beyond this the rock type of existence cannot go; it may indeed crumble into pieces, and create a soil out of which some plant of the vegetable order may grow; but it cannot become a tree. Then again, the birch or any other luxuriant leafy grace of the glens is separated from the animal creation by a condition equally

restrictive; with all its grace, and with all its luxuriance, and with all its playful flirtations with the passing breeze, it stands immovably rooted in the rock; it may wave its arms, or rather its arms may be waved, but its root cannot be stirred without destruction. Locomotion is denied to the tree as much as to the mountain crystal. Take now the dog, a familiar presentation of the third platform. He starts into life as swift as the wind and as light as a feather; he too can be trained from the wild hunter of the woods into the obedient servant and reverential worshipper of the unfeathered biped called man: but beyond this he cannot go; he can understand a wink and obey a nod; he can bark and he can bite; he can value a caress and fear a rod; but he can claim no sympathy with a single reasonable sentence expressive of a sequence of reasonable ideas in the creature who stands supreme on the superior platform. He has no language; why? Simply because, not possessing the inward reason—what the Greeks called the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος, he cannot possess the outward expression of it, the λόγος προφορικός of the same subtle people. Then what does this reason, this God-given godlike λόγος on the stage of highest earthly vitality mean? No doubt a man must stand on his own legs, and hold by *terra firma* as much as the meanest worm or the most huge hippopotamus; he cannot jump out of his skin; nay, in the earliest form in which he greets the day, he is

more weak and more helpless than any animal, winged or wingless, in air or land or sea. But mark how he advances; not as the tree grows, only taller and more branchy, but into an entirely different creature; from the most weakly dependent of all creatures, step by step, and stage by stage, he develops into the most self-dependent, self-assertive, and self-formative of all living things. Training unquestionably he requires, as much as a vine-tree or a dog; but his training is merely a preparatory drill for enabling him to train himself, for teaching him that his true existence as a man has only then commenced, when he has seriously set himself to the formation of his own character, mapping out his own sphere. In this self-formative energy the differential quality of a human being consists. The lower animals, like the rocks and the trees, are left with their unerring instincts and their innate tendencies in the hands of Nature and of God; man alone has the wonderful privilege of being planted here to work out his own destiny, by a process of self-education which only begins where instinct and innate tendencies end. He enters life as his own master, with the privilege of rising to the level of the gods if he acts wisely, and of sinking lower than the brutes if he plays the fool. This distinctive basis of all human as compared with vegetable and animal life on the earth being fixed, our next question is how far the same principle of an impassable barrier between platform and platform may

affect the relation of masculine and feminine on the same platform. On the inferior platform we recognise a cow and a bull, a pea-hen and a peacock, as possessing certain incommunicable attributes which separate the two sexes as distinctively as a tree is different from a rock, or a dog from a tree. But the gap in this case of two human beings, a man and a woman, though no less distinctly revealed to the external eye, is rendered internally less and less appreciable by the action of the self-formative faculty characteristic of the human being. Different as the more delicate sex is from the stronger in tissue and texture, she has that within her which, by training and culture, may bring her more and more into a community of feeling and action with her sturdy counterpart. She may borrow from him, in the course of rounding off her character, some share of the strength and decision which is his peculiar boast, as on the other hand he may soften down the rough edges of his male nature by the contagion of the female grace and sweetness. And this is in fact what we see every day in the contrast between a rude ill-mannered man and the perfect gentleman. What is a gentleman? As a well-mannered man he is simply a well-rounded man, a man who has smoothed down the roughness of the rude unfeathered male biped by the amenity and the grace that belongs to the other sex. He has achieved in his social presentment that balance of contraries, in which all the

cunning of the most perfect forms of existence resides. A stick that unites all the strength of a cudgel with the lightness of a cane will be a perfect stick, equally adapted for a smart blow or a gentle rap. So Apollo among the gods is at once the most pleasing and the most potent figure that the Greek mythological gallery contains, a god equally remote from the yielding sweetness of Aphrodite and the rude strength of Hercules. He is a perfect god-man, and can make his arrows as effectually felt on his foes as Jove's thunderbolt, without being shrouded in those rolls of darkness with which the Thunderer loves to invest his vengeful discharge. In the same way a woman may indeed be content with posing only as a Venus, in which guise she is altogether and purely female; but, if she does justice to the self-formative instinct that belongs to her as a human being, she may raise herself into the fellowship of the Muses, the ministers of the Sun-god, or mount even higher, as a Minerva, the faithful agent and the wise vicegerent of the supreme Jove. Let us say therefore, following out these analogies, that the perfect woman is she who, while presenting in full blossom to the general eye all the charms and graces which are the special glory of her sex, has known to combine with them the large intelligence, impartial survey, firm grasp, and imperative will which are the typical virtues of the other sex. In other words, as in a fortress, she must build up the weak sides of her citadel without in

any way neglecting her natural vantage points of attack and defence. Let us inquire, therefore, what the strong points of a woman's character are, which it must be her prime care to secure, and what the weaker are which a wise self-culture may strengthen and bring into a well-balanced harmony with the whole.

In the first place we take the physical structure as the foundation of the dominant vital force which we call the soul. Here the wisdom of training lies in giving full and free play to all the bodily organs, so far as is consistent with the grace, beauty, and delicacy so essentially characteristic of the female type. In this view, though strength is undoubtedly to be sought for, and will be obtained by a wise exercise of the organs, yet we must say that in the main agility and dexterity are to be cultivated in the gymnastics of the young woman, rather than feats of potent muscularity. There is no exercise more fitted to make a strong and well-balanced bodily machine than pedestrianism; therefore, while the young of both sexes should be trained to use their legs largely, five or ten miles a day will be a just allowance to the more delicate sex for ten or twenty that may be requisite to bring out the motive capacity of the young man. In games also, and out-of-door recreations, care should be taken that, while all games, such as football, cricket, boat-racing, and high-leaping, which are apt to be associated with violent exertion, should be

excluded from the female field, dancing and skipping, lawn-tennis, croquet, and bowling should be looked upon as the natural arena for the display of their physical powers. Between these two classes of healthy recreation the game of golf, so wisely borrowed from stout Scotland by majestic England, holds a middle place; and while it is quite certain that, as at present played on the broad links of St. Andrews, Aberdeen, and Montrose, its efficient performance demands a degree of strength both of leg and arm not to be expected in the normal samples of the other sex, there is no reason why this most healthy, vigorous, and graceful recreation should not be practised by ladies on a smaller scale; exactly as in climbing, where Bencleuch and Dunmyat in the Ochil range may satisfy the ambition of the gentler sex; but Ben Ledi and Ben Lomond in the Grampian outworks will be required to evoke the more ambitious muscularity of the man.

So much for the body; in the spiritual sphere of our marvellous structure, we discover a cognate and no less distinctive differentiation. In the woman we find a dominance of the emotional element in such a fashion as to correspond exactly with the delicacy and the beauty of her corporeal frame. Of course the male animal also has passions: passion is the steam of the moral world, and without steam the machine would not go; but with woman the impassioned element is not only more prominent, but it is softened and tem-

pered by the love, which St. Paul calls the fulfilling of the law, and which transferred from the Greek appears as the English word sympathy. Sympathy (*συμπάθεια*) means a fellow-feeling with others, an instinctive readiness to act on the other text of the wise Apostle, "Weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice." Woman is a more sympathetic creature than a man; if less strongly self-assertive than the other sex, she is characteristically less selfish; and herein lies her special glory and her mighty power in the social world. For what does that sentence of the Apostle practically mean? what has love to do with law? everything. Law is only a part and a very small part of love; it is love in a narrow sphere of measurable prescription, and generally expressed in a negative form: "Thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness," and so forth. No man with love in his soul will dream of doing any such thing; and so without any promise of reward or fear of penalty, the man with love in his soul fulfils these laws, and for him courts of justice are altogether useless tribunals. The power which sits on the throne of his soul fulfils an infinitely higher law than what any human court of justice, with its narrow range of measurable prohibition and compulsory duties, can take account of. If law be in the main prohibitive and retributive, love is in its essence attractive, conciliatory, and cohesive; and in its social action can be compared to nothing more fitly than to a musical note under the hand

of a great composer, which refuses to assert itself in any place or in any degree which may disturb the harmonious expression of the piece. In this way love is not only, in the vulgar sense, the fulfilling of the law, but the attractive force which makes law possible; a force without which all common action among diversely constituted beings would be impossible, and apart from which that pleasant interplay of kindred creatures which we call society would resolve into a arena of bears and wolves and tigers, where only a greater or less amount of murder could give rise to any social distinction.

There is one special utterance of the emotional element in the human being which demands special mention — this is reverence. How is this connected with love? Naturally enough. The sympathetic feeling which binds being to being in this vast and various world will be called for the most frequently between equals, or persons acting on the same platform of social intercommunion. But with this familiar range the reaching grasp of this godlike passion may not be contented; it descends eagerly to the lower and lowest regions of social interdependence; and in this not unfrequent field of its exercise, it is called pity and compassion. On the other hand, when it mounts to a higher platform of kindly recognition, it stands before the general eye as respect and reverence; and when striving upwards to the highest, it takes the attitude of worship and adoration, and finds its social

expression in the practice of piety and the services of religion. In this region its nature at least to the outward eye is so changed, that instead of the love of God it is in Scripture frequently called the fear of God. This, however, is only one aspect of the upward emotion. In religion as in all other fields of ethical life, "perfect love casteth out fear;" and just as in the family relation of common life, a certain reverential fear must always be mixed up with the love which a good child cherishes to a kind father, so in the kindred relation of the whole human family to the All-Father of the Universe, the same kindly tempering of grateful familiarity with loyal fear will prevail. So explained, woman, just because she is the more loving creature, is at the same time the more reverential, and the more religious presentment of the human type. To the honour of the sex be it stated, that a well-conditioned woman is as distinctly a religious creature as a bird is a winged creature and a dog a racing creature. So much so indeed, that while a professed atheist among bearded men is only a fool, a female atheist, like Harriet Martineau, is a monster, as much as a bird without wings or a fish without fins.

Such being the moral constitution of the more loving and lovable half of the human type, her sphere of action in the interplay of human forces, called society, can be given without the slightest difficulty in a very few words. In all those spheres of benevolent activity which spring so naturally from the

inspiration of Christian love, women will be prime movers, whether it be feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, or instructing the ignorant. Their kindly hand will never be wanting; and if they do not always appear publicly as leaders and directors of charitable institutions, they will often be found to have been the original instigators of plans of social amendment, of which their male partners assumed the advocacy and usurped the praise. Specially in this connection it will be found that, while his pulpit ministrations and church business of various kinds keep the evangelical action of the minister of a parish more in the public eye, a great deal of the most valuable parochial work, such as the kindly visitation of the sick, the motherly superintendence of the young, and the many small acts of attention that bind the lower classes to the upper, are performed more efficiently by the minister's wife than by the minister. This fact alone, growing as it does out of the inmost nature of womanhood, places in the strongest light the absurdity of the Popish doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy. An unmarried priest will be like any other unmarried person of the bearded sex, only half a man, and be more apt to pamper a lofty sacerdotal conceit, than to rouse a kindly human affection. In all the devout exercises and deeds of pious sisterhood that belong to the essence of an efficient Christian Church, women must ever be the most efficient instruments of clerical government; and it is

better to have known their value from the experience of domestic life, than to demand their help from the lofty platform of clerical dignity. Not every leader of a spiritual army, such as Moses, may know to lead the people in a song of victory for the horse and the rider whom his powers may have thrown into the sea; but if he is a wise man as well as a strong general he will know where to find a Miriam, a prophetess who will sing the pæan to his progress, and march forth with timbrel and harp, and an array of patriotic maidens to dance a sacred dance of triumph before the Lord.

So much for the emotional sweetness of the fair sex, which in the sphere of religion gives the seasoning to the spiritual food of the soul that would loose the best part of its relish without it. But this is not all. Though it is not in woman's normal sphere to go forth like David, and encounter a giant Philistine in open field of battle, yet she has the divine force in her which will on occasion make her burst forth into floods of sentiment, and dash into deeds of noble venture that may rank proudly with the most highly vaunted achievements of soldiership in the stronger sex. History is full of such acts of female heroism; and Joan of Arc in our French wars is in no wise a solitary instance of a peasant girl not out of her teens, under the influence of a purely female inspiration, performing deeds of valour which put the whole military strength of court and country to shame. These noble

eruptions of more than masculine manhood in the feebler sex could not fail to excite the admiration of the ancient classical writers, both Greek and Roman. Tacitus (*Hist.* ii. 18) in his account of a victory gained by Civilis the leader of the Batavians in a rebellion which they raised against the Romans in the reign of Vespasian, has a remarkable passage—

"Civilis," he says, "surrounded by the standards of the captive cohorts, with the design on the one hand of planting the recent glory of his arms before the eyes of his soldiers, and on the other hand that his Roman adversaries might be terrified by the fresh memory of their defeat, ordered his mother and sister, with the wives and little children of his men, to take their station in the rear of his army, serving at once as a stimulus to further success and a reproach if they should be beaten; and the whole field resounded with the war-song of the women."

Specially Plutarch, in his interesting essay on the virtues of women, has a long array of authenticated stories, in which the women not only by their presence on the field of battle fill the brave with courage and the cowards with shame, but actually march into the front and decide the fate of the day. Of the Gauls, he tells us that before their descent into Italy they had been weakening their strength by internal dissensions, clan against clan, as the Irish were when conquered by our second Henry. Perceiving the evil to which these domestic quarrels had led, the Gallic women, throwing themselves between the armed com-

batants, produced such a reconciliation and unity of counsel that for ever afterwards the custom remained of never declaring war without holding a council of which the women should be members. Of the Persian women, to a like effect, he tells us that when, in his war against the Medes in the time of Astyages, the army of Cyrus had been repulsed and were fleeing in haste to the city, they were met by the women with the cry: *Out on you poltroons! if you flee, you shall not enter whence ye went out;* and with this noble burst of indignation they turned the men back into their ranks and gained the day. Yet again, the same great biographer narrates of an Argive woman, Telesilla, a poetess, that when Cleomenes, King of Sparta, at the head of a stout army of that nation of soldiers, was approaching near to the city, she in a moment of divine (δαιμόνιος) boldness, putting herself at the head of the women of the city, marched to the ramparts, occupied the walls, and drove the invaders back into their tents. In memory of this noble exploit the Argives celebrated a feast in the fourth month of every year on the day of the battle, in which the women appeared clad in male attire, tunic and plaid, while the men disported themselves in the stole and the veil that belonged to the gentler sex. Would it were ever so! that the dress might always proclaim the character, and no lion's skin give even a momentary look of boldness to an ass.

But woman is not merely an emotional

creature; as a human being she is also reasonable and intellectual; and without reason her noblest emotions would evaporate into smoke. She must always know where she is; and how she is to use her circumstances, shape her course, and control her impulses. We have therefore to inquire in what fashion this directing and regulating force, necessary to all sane human action, exhibits itself in the fair sex. Nor will the answer be difficult. Following out the principle of balance, above accentuated, the woman must seek to develop her intelligence primarily in those fields where her emotional nature finds its most ample gratification, while at the same time she trains herself to adopt as much of the intellectual strength of the less emotional sex as may be consistent with the dominance of her more engaging type. In preserving this balance and achieving this complement, it is evident that the natural instruments of female culture are poetry and music and the fine arts generally, for to them the emotional capacity belongs as naturally as the blossom to the lily and the flower to the rose. No doubt there is a sort of poetry that has no root in reality, being in fact mere coloured mists of fancy which amuse the eye for a moment, and then vanish into vacuity; and with this women of an inferior type may be content, but the poetry which we speak of here as the appropriate form of a well-rounded intellectual culture in the fair sex has its firm root in reality and its ripe fruit in wisdom; a

poetry adding wings to the soul, like a bird for the nonce, but not depriving it of its firm terrestrial footing. The creeping thought of the soul in prose, becomes a bird the moment it begins to sing; and all poetry, as we see in Homer, is naturally voiced with song, just as the music of the birds in spring comes forth with the green buds of May. Taken in this wider sense poetry means a great deal more than the mere stringing together of dainty fancies and sonorous rhymes. The materials of a poetry of culture must be gathered from large fields of nature and life; and for this purpose the observant faculties, the memory and the imagination, must be brought largely into play. The sympathy which we noted above as so strong in the female character, is not only a power which draws soul to soul in the human circle, but in the sphere of poetry it sends friendly hands forth to know and to embrace all that is beautiful and striking in the living picture gallery of God, which we call Nature. In harmony with this we find that the observant faculty in the fair sex is differentially strong. The eye of a woman has a nice range and a curious subtlety which fastens eagerly on beauties and blots that escape the ruder and the less discriminating glance of the male. Natural history therefore in all its branches, and drawing as the special training instrument for observation, will form a prominent subject in the programme of education for young women; and with these will naturally be

associated a living memory and a living imagination, faculties of primary importance to the healthy action of a cultured mind, but alas! how often neglected or cheated of their proper place in the educational tactics of our age, in which the living glory of the faculties is habitually sacrificed to the vexing of the eyes with the record of dead books, and cramming the brain with strange detail of useless knowledge. But for the culture of the complete woman, human history, or history commonly so-called, is even of more importance than the furnishing the picture gallery of the imagination with rich memories of living types of natural beauty; but to have this educational virtue it must be taught in a moral and spiritual way, not as a mere array of sequent facts and calculated dates, but in portraits of truly great men, such as David, King of Israel, St. Paul, Akbar the Mogul Emperor, Martin Luther, and John Knox, as they lived and moved in the foreground of the societies which their formative genius stamped with the type of a noble nationality.

With pure science, and spheres of intellectual action and curious remark, which have nothing or little of the emotional element in their constitution, the sympathetic sex, in the general case, can have little to do, except of course in special cases when a beardless woman may be more purely intellectual than a bearded man. Up to a certain point also, and in a certain degree as a corrective to the one-sidedness of a purely emotional culture, an

initiation into these severe sciences belongs to the young of both sexes. Mathematics, for instance, though I have been wont to define it as the measure of all things and the substance of nothing, is nevertheless highly useful, and that in two respects, first because when its unsubstantial conclusions are applied to the measure of existing forms and forces of which the beautiful order of the world is made up, they become practically of the utmost value in all exact knowledge of natural phenomena; and again, because even when unapplied in the pure formal array of their propositions, they give to the disciplined mind a living feeling of that law of necessary sequence so constantly sinned against in the loose and illogical conclusions of social intercourse. For the same reason pure logic and metaphysics, if not, as is too often the case in Scotland, practised by crude and unripe minds, may have their place in a well-ordered scheme of female education; though, of course, any prominence of mere logical argumentativeness, if it mars even the march of a gentleman's talk, is absolutely destructive of the fragrant grace that ought to flow from the lips of a fair lady.

There is one field of literary action peculiarly fitted for the development of the female faculty, which deserves special mention. It is the field of fictitious narrative commonly called novels, a field in which it is needless to say that not a few of the noblest women of the present day have reaped well-earned laurels. What is a novel? It is a fiction of human life and character,

the very sphere in which a sympathetic creature will naturally disport, with pleasure to herself and benefit to mankind; and though, of course, this field is equally open to the man, the woman, with her special magic of love, will be able to touch many senses more nicely, and to unmask not a few dangerous deceits more tenderly than a man. In this view a good novel—for I speak not of stories worked out in strong colours for the sensational delight of the hour—a good healthy-minded novel will be the best sermon; for it will tell of many serious things, and slippery chances, of which the pulpit, from various causes, is habitually shy. And not only a sermon, but a drama also, as any one may see in the stage adaptations from Scott's novels; a good novel, in fact, always containing the essential materials that make a good drama; and the dramatic form of the story, in the hands of a skilful disposer, will be more effective than the prose narrative; obviously because the stage at once strips the story of long pendicles of talk with which it may be encumbered, and presents its more striking features, in a sequence of speaking realities, with which no bookish narrator can compete. The stage will thus become the right hand of the pulpit; and if it has not been so always, and specially in Scotland never has been so, it was not the fault of the instrument but of the handler who refused to use it.

So much for the arena of literary activity in the present age so widely occupied by the fair

sex. But all women are not literary, however well fitted for life; and here comes the question: for domestic life only and the quiet but all-important sphere of motherhood, or for public life also in all or any of its departments? Can a woman be a preacher? Might a lady be a bishop? Could a lady be a lawyer, a doctor, a prescriber of drugs, or a surgeon? May she be a professor in a university, a headmaster in a school? And above all may she be a politician, and an M.P.? These are serious questions; and as they are seriously asked at the present hour, deserve to be seriously answered.

In answering this question we are met on the threshold with a deeply-rooted social instinct, and a very high apostolic authority. The instinct declares that the sphere of woman is more domestic than public, more within the house than without, and St. Paul, not less strongly, that women should not take any prominent part in the prophesying, or, as we would say, preaching that belongs to the public assemblies of the Christian Church. His words are particularly strong, "The head of the woman is the man," says he; "the man is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man" (1 Cor. xi.) In this doctrine the student of the Greek drama will find himself forcibly reminded of the train of argument by which the combined wisdom of Apollo and Pallas, in the Aeschylean play, gives a verdict in favour of the son who had executed vengeance on the wife who had

murdered her husband, rather than in favour of the wife who had been murdered by her son. The real head of family life is the father, not the mother, and in a contention betwixt the two the cry for the avenging justice of Jove, according to Greek ideas, will rise up louder in behalf of the injured male. But the Apostle is not content with this assertion of the general relation of inferiority in which nature, or to use his more pious phrase, God has placed the woman. In a subsequent chapter he descends to particulars: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: let them be under obedience: and if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church." These are strong words; and it cannot be denied that a very general sentiment, founded on a healthy human instinct, responds in our day, in the most unqualified fashion, to this teaching of the greatest of the Apostles. There is a native modesty in the weaker sex, it is felt, that should keep them aloof from any appearance on the noisy and contentious and often rude platform of public life. In this sentiment there is doubtless a great amount of truth; but all general maxims are liable to exceptions, and are true only when they keep within their proper sphere, and do not attempt to shake themselves loose from the conditions of time, place, and circumstances out of which they arose. In this view it is of importance to remark that the Bible is not a book in the same sense that Aristotle's *Ethics*

is a book, or a treatise on the law of marriage is a book; it is a collection of books extending over a period of more than two thousand years, growing out of local roots, and coloured by the peculiarities of time and place under which they arose. In this respect the difference, or rather antagonism, between the books of the Mosaic law and the records of gospel teaching, are felt by every student of the sacred volume; no one is surprised to find certain rites and ordinances made of primary importance in the book of Leviticus, which the gospel of Jesus has swept away as so many weeds encumbering the growth of the mature plant of Christian ethics; but not every reader of the New Testament is careful to consider that the direct words of Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, and other places of the Gospels, pronounced as applicable to all times and places, as essential chapters of the evangelic law, are one thing, and the special rules of the Apostles, in regulating the conduct of the early churches, another and a very different thing. Let us consider how this applies to the Apostolic Epistles generally, and specially to the first Epistle to the Corinthians with which we are here concerned. Any one may see that the prominence given to faith in the Epistle to the Romans, as to works in the Epistle of James, was caused by the dominance of certain one-sided and narrow conceptions of Christian truth, in the churches to which these letters were addressed; and no person who does not take this difference into consideration can

succeed, either in understanding the argument as originally put, or knowing how to apply it to cognate conceptions entertained by shallow readers of the sacred volume at the present day. Now the Corinthians, the inhabitants of a very wealthy, luxurious, and dissolute city, were, as is evident from the whole train of this Epistle, a very disorderly and ill-conditioned Church, and disgraced by some of the most glaring offences against our vulgar morality, crying loudly for apostolic reprehension. Nor was Paul the man to spare the use of the strongest terms, and no doubt with the most perfect wisdom, in reprehension of the then condition of the early congregations of believers. In an infant church, on which the uncharitable eye of the whole Heathen and Jewish world rested, nothing could be more dangerous than the existence of a disorderly congregation of both sexes, in which any man or woman could rise in the fervour of a hasty inspiration, with a song or a sermon, in all sorts of understood and not understood tongues, and excite a whirl and a hubbub of confused prophesying. Women especially, from the dominance of the emotional element in their constitution, would be liable to put themselves forward in the van of such prophetic excess; and the prominence of the more reticent sex in such interspersed explosions could not fail to create a scandal extremely injurious to the character of the Church. The Apostle Paul, therefore, was fully justified in stating the doctrine of the natural position of

woman in the strong terms quoted above. In the main it always was, and always must be true, that even in the administration of family affairs, the man is the head of the woman; let her be content to have the heart, which is the soul, and the hands which work the grace of the domestic economy; but outside this sphere, in the clamorous atmosphere of public life, or the platform of political wrangling or ecclesiastical thunder, the seldomer she shows her face the better.

This in a general sense is plainly what the Apostle means; but when his sentence, "it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church," as specially applied to the circumstances, condition, and style of women in the early Corinthian Church, is attempted to be raised into an absolute rule for all times and places, a reasonable man will see good reason to dissent. Should a woman be a preacher? Can a woman be a preacher? That she can I know well; for one of the best sermons I ever heard was from a lady, a member of the Society of Friends, in the good town of Newcastle. Of course a woman will not preach with all the force and stern urgency of a bearded male; but she will have a style of her own, which will have its place in the movement of the moral world, as appropriately as the clear wimpling brook of the valley has its charm alongside of the foaming rush of the mountain torrent. In the early times of the Judges, not only men but women, as Deborah, the sister of Barak, were prophetesses and judges of the

people, and after splendid victories over the surrounding heathens, came forward publicly, like Telesilla, and other musical women amongst the Greeks, to sing their anthem of praise before the whole congregation, in a fashion which St. Paul, with his inherent good sense, would certainly not have disapproved.

Women therefore may certainly, under wise regulations, preach in public when they have the gift, and the occasion has a natural demand on their eloquence; just as we saw in the case of the Gauls, that they might even draw the sword and regain a lost battle to the shame of the dastard males. Yes, preach, certainly preach and prophesy; on certain subjects their special experience and their special sympathy will make them much better preachers than men. But should women be official guides and rulers of the church, as vicars and bishops in the Episcopalian Church, and parochial ministers in the Presbyterian? That is another question; and brings in the element of the capacity of women not only for preaching and prophesying but for guidance and government in the conduct of public business. Deborah no doubt was a judge of Israel as well as Samuel; but she was an exceptional character in exceptional times; and we shall think twice before we give her, as a rule, either the priest's surplice or the lawyer's wig. On the whole, I am inclined to think that from the predominance of the emotional element in their character, gifted women are more fitted to stimulate and to elevate the

society of which they are a part by the contagion of their noble nature, than to take an active part in the regulation and conduct of public affairs—affairs in which great coolness and stern severity are not seldom as necessary as tender sympathy and gentle piety. I would not, therefore, even in the less worldly sphere of religion, desire to see the fair sex habitually performing the public duties of a vicar or a bishop. An eloquent woman may often make a more effective appeal to an assembly of sympathetic Christians than the most powerful orator of the stronger sex, and yet be utterly unable to deal with discretion and discrimination in much of the secular business which is apt to attach itself to the official administration of spiritual matters in the complex organism of modern society. Generally speaking, I feel convinced that a pious-minded lady will do much more effective service in a Christian parish by the incidental side work which she can suggest and conceive, than by planting herself at the head of the spiritual army and in the van of the battle. And if the conduct of church business is thus wisely remitted to the man in a sphere so peculiarly feminine, there can be no mistake in excluding her from the peculiarly masculine profession of the law. No doubt a woman has a tongue; and in a jury case, where a passionate appeal has to be made to an impressionable audience, I could imagine no more effective pleader than a woman; but jury cases connected with the strong expres-

sion of ardent human feeling are rare; and for the general business of a barrister any display of delicate feeling would be quite out of place. Justice is cool; and the daily exercise of pleading in the law court is more correctly described as a deft exercise of intellectual fence than as a large display of human affection. The professional habits of a lawyer indeed tend rather to freeze than to foster the growth of sentiment in the soul. He has to do with stern enactments and formal prescriptions, which are no doubt necessary for the public good, but with which anything like personal feeling or individual sentiment has no concern. To the horse-hair wig, therefore, and the stern brow of the robed judge, no daughter of Eve will wisely aspire. With medicine it is otherwise. From the days of Agamede downwards, as in Homer's song—

> "A skilful leech, and well she knew all herbs on ground that grow,"

women have been celebrated for their kindly skill in soothing the smarts of the wounded, and sweetening the sorrows of the sick. Their especial training from the nursery upwards points plainly to the medical profession as peculiarly their own; and, though some of the preparatory studies for this benevolent sphere of human activity are rather repulsive to the delicate sensibility of the female sex, and some operations of the surgical branch of the profession may demand a force of arm and

a firm grasp not normally belonging to gentle maidens, the noble self-devotion, moral courage, and practised self-denial of the sex will lead them bravely through these difficulties and arm them stoutly, if not for all branches of the healing art, at least secure them a large field of effective action. The success which they have achieved in this line of benevolent action, known to the public by a few honoured names, must be regarded as one of the greatest triumphs of our most recent civilisation.

So much for the three learned professions, so called, naturally because to their exercise belongs a special intellectual capacity acting in concert with large stores of historical record or results of scientific research. But what of politics? Is the conduct of public business not a profession; and if the practice of law justly places a man in the foremost rank of the social army, does not the Member of Parliament who makes the law, which it is the duty of the judge to interpret and to apply, exercise a profession of a kindred character and of a superior rank? Unquestionably; and, if we felt ourselves obliged to confess that the guidance and control of public life in the more feminine sphere of religion did not lightly consort with the gentler nature of the woman, much more must we say that the difficult and slippery ground of governing a nation, and the steering of the State vessel through the boisterous contention of political parties, is alien to the finest elements of the female mind.

We shall say therefore absolutely that a woman in a free state should not be a Member of Parliament. But this is only one aspect of the business. Though not a supreme regulator, a woman is always a citizen of the state to which she belongs; and, if a citizen in a free state, she is entitled to use the influence which belongs to her station and position in the social economy. If she asserts her right to political influence in this secondary form, it is difficult to see in the field of argument what objections can be made to her claim. But in practice a consideration may occur which, with not a few of the noblest specimens of the sex, may have great weight. Political life even in its secondary stages is a troubled element, and the atmosphere which it breathes is always more or less impure from the hot steam and poison of selfish regards which it creates. In fact, from the greatness of the stakes, and the dependence on an unreasonable multitude on the one hand, and a handful of lofty bribes on the other, there is no sphere of public life, as a distinguished statesman once said in my hearing, which presents so many temptations to deflection from the straight line of honesty as politics. If so, it is a sphere from which the purer nature of the more moral sex may justly shrink. If her recognition by the State as a unit in the final appeal of a contested election could do no harm to the State, might not the taking an active part in a struggle where feverish passions poison the blood do great

harm to her? A danger certainly lies here. Such is the rancour apt to be begotten in the struggle for power and place which a contested election practically means, that even individuals of the stronger sex have been known to abstain from taking part in the fray. On the whole, therefore, I should incline to leave it in the election of the fair sex themselves whether they would wish to take an active part in the choice of our legislators. If a majority of them come forward and make such demand, I for one should not oppose it. It is their business, not mine. If they will walk with silken shoes in dirty puddles, let them walk. Only one thing I would add; that the feeling of the more noble element in society should be distinctly known and uttered, and when uttered might have an appreciable weight in turning the scale of public opinion, I hold to be quite certain; but this weight of the female sentiment might make itself felt in many ways without dragging the fair creature into the foul air of party fever. Not to mention the influence behind the domestic throne, which a sensible woman may often exercise on a husband of dubious politics, there are in the State as in the Church not a few stages where a woman may profitably appear without taking part directly in a public struggle either as a counsellor or a warrior. There are leagues, and clubs, and associations of all kinds as free to the women of all parties as to the admirers of D'Israeli.

One remark only remains. It has from a

long series of precedents been a principle in the practice of modern education to exclude the fair sex from the advantages of the highest academical culture, and to bar the door of the universities against them as if their mere presence there were a disturbance and a plague. This notion probably proceeded more from the fear of the bad manners of young men than from jealousy of the talents of the rival fair ones. But now that the march into the field of medical practice has been formally allowed to the more dainty sex, there can be no excuse for acting on the monkish principle of forbidding the association of intelligent young women with young men in the intellectual gymnastics of the university. If any danger might be apprehended from the familiar intercourse of the sexes, it is a danger that belongs in no wise eminently to meetings for intellectual instruction, but as much, I fancy, or rather more, to balls, or dress-boxes in theatres, in concerts, in prayer-meetings, and mixed assemblies of all kinds. Even in church a man may fall in love with a fair damsel sitting in the opposite pew as readily as in an academical lecture-room. For myself, I feel that this most recent triumph of a large intellectual sympathy over the narrow views of a secluded domesticity will do as much to improve the manners of young men, as to enlarge the intelligence of young women. It is not the light and flippant flourishes of ball-room fans that will be given to court the atmosphere of grave prelections and severe examinations on serious

subjects. Young ladies of an intellectual tendency and a Christian morality will know how to maintain their own dignity in a class-room as well as in a ball-room; and their presence in any respectable assembly will do more to elevate the rude by their example than to disturb the foolish by their presence. Wherever women appear, except, of course, in times of general corruption, they are the salt of society. In the Gospels they stand prominently as the most loyal followers of Him whose sad honour it was to have been slandered by the Scribes and crucified by the priests of the age. And in the range of apostolic preaching that followed after the resurrection, in learned Athens, we find that, while stern Stoics and light Epicureans combined to meet the great Apostle with a rude "*What will this babbler say?*" a woman named Damaris, following in the track of a judge in the court of the Areopagus, gave her name as a member of the infant Christian Church in Athens; and from this small seed, under divine providence, there grew up a mighty tree, to which, after the lapse of nearly two thousand years, was reserved the honour of freeing the most intellectual centre of South-Eastern Europe from the desolating tyranny of the Turks.

V

ST. PAUL AND THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Our beloved brother Paul in all his epistles, in which there are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

2 PETER iii. 16.

ST. PAUL AND THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

No thoughtful reader of the New Testament can fail to have been struck with the specific character of the Epistle to the Romans, as compared with the other apostolic missives of the same great man. His other letters may be characterised generally as letters of kindly sympathy, friendly advice, or, as in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, of church arrangement and ecclesiastical business; but this communication to the Romans, though not without an appendix so to speak of that sound practical appeal for which the great Apostle was so distinguished, is in the main doctrinal; an argumentative handling of the great matters in dispute among the first Christians and specially the Jewish converts, and a handling also that does not shrink from contact with some of the most subtle questions that belong to the most abstract metaphysics. The only other Epistle that can claim any affinity with the Romans in this aspect is that to the

Hebrews commonly attributed to St. Paul, but not without a felt weight of contradiction from theologians of authority; an epistle however which bears a distinct kinship with the Romans in respect of detailed argumentative form, though without the metaphysical background. The special prominence given to doctrine accounts for the great use made of the Epistle to the Romans in the compilation of all our creeds and confessions, especially the Protestant, which in their very nature could not but assume a systematic form, altogether different from the purely epistolary style of the Apostle John, or of our Saviour's teaching in the Gospels. I shall endeavour therefore to summarise this theological discourse shortly; an attempt which may be the more useful, because Christians of the present day, like myself, are much more concerned to measure their daily conduct of life by the wise maxims of the twelfth chapter than to trace the exact sequence of the arguments in the main body of the Epistle.

In the first chapter two propositions are set forth formally as the basis of all religious teaching, both universally human and specifically Christian—first, that to any reasoning mind the order and beauty of the structure of the physical world necessarily leads to the belief in a great ordering and unifying cause which we call God. As soon might an army march through the various steps of a plan of campaign, leading to a glorious victory, without a commander-in-chief; or the notes in a

musical instrument leap into the nice sequence of a symphony, without a Mozart or a Beethoven to fix their places; or a machine put its wheels, boilers, and funnels into working order without a James Watt or a Henry Bell; or again, the stones in a quarry shape themselves into the scheme and jointure of a habited house without a master-builder, as this goodly world of curious structure and complex action be conceived as the result of an infinitude of forceful atoms playing at blind man's buff with one another. This is the great fundamental truth of all religion, acknowledged alike by popular instinct, common sense, Greek wisdom, and Hebrew inspiration. There is one God, and λόγος, or self-consistent, self-shaping Reason is his name. The detailed exposition of this conclusion of all intellectual sanity, in professional books, is what goes under the name of Natural Theology, so honourably connected in our literature with the name of Dr. Paley: but, in fact, it requires no exposition; to doubt it is as if a man should desire to formulate his belief in the stability of the ground on which he stands. St. Paul, therefore, merely glances at this as a fact which proved itself to every man with seeing eyes; but the moral sphere, in which the self-existent spirit of order displays itself, may not be equally manifest to all. Nevertheless to all healthy minds it is manifest, and St. Paul does not take the trouble separately to state its application to the moral world of which he was the apostle. Immoral men there no doubt

might be in the moral world, men whose passion blinded them to the moral order of the universe depending on a reasonable unifying cause, as much as the march of the stars, or the growth of the green mantle of beauty on the earth. Immorality in the social world, like earthquakes, and thunderstorms, and tempests of all kinds, is occasional and passing, and does not in anywise trench on the fundamental truth that in both worlds order is the law, and a law which commands reverence from all who live under the controlling sphere of its action. Therefore the Apostle is quite entitled to say that as the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, so the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Man is a social being; sociality implies order: and order amongst social beings can arise only from the action of that reasonable love which binds all the members of a social body together, and rejoices in the reverential regard of that primal reasonable love which made the existence of social beings possible. To this reverential recognition of the common source of all social order, selfishness in all its forms, and specially that species of selfishness which implies the usurpation of the throne of reason in reasonable beings by carnal appetites and fleshly lusts, is diametrically opposed. It is at once a disintegrating and a degrading force, and virtually manifests

itself in acts of open rebellion against the supreme λόγος or reasonable authority in the universe. So much for his second proposition, which means in modern phrase that religion is the key-stone of the social arch, a proposition which no thoughtful student of human nature or human history can deny. Only one important remark on this head remains. It is plain not only from this passage of St. Paul, but from the general style and substance of the denunciations of the other apostles against the heathenism of their times, that it was not so much doctrinal heresy in the modern sense against which they launched their bolts, as against the gross sensualism both among Greeks and Romans, which found a justification only too readily in the dissipation of the mundane forces which so naturally spring from a Polytheistic theology. No doubt with Homer or with Socrates the supreme regulative power of the moral as of the physical world lay with Zeus. But if a man, fond of a glass of wine, got drunk on festal occasions, or an erotic youth indulged in sensual pleasures equally degrading to himself as to the victim of his passion, it was obvious to gloss over the offence by a pious appeal to a Dionysus or an Aphrodite, a sort of white-washing which under a strictly moral monotheism would have been impossible. An orthodox Jew might be a formalist, but he could not stamp the name of God on pure sensualism.

So far well. The creed of the monotheist gave not the slightest suggestion of a consecrated sensualism; but was he therefore

practically free from those sensual vices the familiar indulgence in which sinks a man lower than the brute, and which in unguarded moments with subtle insinuation have even made a prey of the most saintly souls? In no wise. It is one thing to profess a perfect creed and another thing to lead a perfect life. St. Paul was a Jew himself, and knew only too well of what stuff priests and doctors of the law were made. Therefore he concludes all under sin. As in the intellectual sphere all men, even the wisest, are ignorant on many points, or one-sided—which is a sort of half-ignorance—in all, so in the sphere of self-government and social action no man is without blot and all men are sinners. This is the Apostle's distinct contention. Next to gross sensualism, self-righteousness is the most common, and in some views the more dangerous form of human sinfulness; for it sets up a routine of observances and the practice of certain prescribed duties on the throne of an arbitrary ideal before which no vulgar virtue may stand any more than pencillings of a schoolboy in the presence of a masterpiece of artistic work. It therefore blinds vision and stops progress; and not only so, but renders it more difficult sometimes to convert a moderately good man than a glaring sinner from the error of his ways. Such a shallow self-estimation and blindness to the moral ideal which Christ preached, and which Christ was, St. Paul notes severely in the Jews, and especially in the complacent conceit in which,

cradling themselves, they habitually indulged in the common sin of judging others severely, and themselves either lightly or not at all. But who are you, breaks out the Apostle, who judgest another who may more properly judge you? Of these two, he who has the written law and breaks it, and he who has no written law, but finds it in his inward conscience and keeps it, which is the more virtuous? More virtuous this latter, even if the other both had the written and unwritten law and kept it, inasmuch as this man had not the public sign-post to point his way, and yet did not wander. What Christianity demands is a spiritual seed that blossoms into the beauty of a holy life, by divine power from within, not a forced conformity with outward regulation in external matters that can be legally defined. Judged by such a low standard a Jewish formalist may be a perfect man, but not before God, who alone judgeth all men by the perfect standard of divine right,—subtle Greek, strong Roman, and legal Jew alike; for there is no respect of persons with God.

Hath then the Jew no advantage at all? Why were they called the chosen people if the choice was neither from the possession of any peculiar virtue nor leading to any special privilege? Unquestionably it was a great advantage and a most peculiar privilege to be entrusted with the oracles of God, oracles destined in due course of the ages, under the conduct of the chosen people, to spread their vivifying virtue over the earth from east to

west, and bring all nations under spiritual subjection to a spiritual law as high above all mere civil or sacerdotal laws as heaven is high above the earth. My brethren, according to the flesh, the Jews, says the wise Apostle, have all reason to be thankful for this advantage, and for this privilege; but an advantage is possessed for the sake of being used, and a privilege to be put into active exercise, not to be made occasion for a vain boast. And so in the third chapter he repeats with stronger emphasis the doctrine of the second that no man is justified or accounted righteous before God by works of formal law, but by faith in the preacher of a spiritual ideal, the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is true not only now, but always has been true in the very nature of the moral world, that man is saved by faith in a Divine Ideal, not by observance of a human real.

So much for the doctrine of salvation by faith, a doctrine which was prominently put forward by Luther, Calvin, and other chief captains of the religious Christian war in the sixteenth century, as a contradictor to the Romanist doctrine of salvation by sacerdotally prescribed works, prayer, penance, and such like; and no doubt rightly for the polemical need of the hour, and quite in harmony with the same antagonism of faith and works as here set forth by the great Apostle of the Gentiles. In the court of reason St. Paul and the Protestant theologians are both right, of course when rightly understood. Faith is opposed not to works from

faith in a moral ideal, but to works from outward conformity to a legal ordinance. But St. Paul was too sensible a man to be content in arguing with prejudiced human beings with mere logical accuracy. He knew that in the gross men are governed in social matters more by authority than by reason, more by persons than by principles. He accordingly in the next head of his discourse goes back to the primal fount of their boasting, to Abraham. Was Abraham, whom all Jews, and in fact the whole east, look to with reverence, saved by works or by faith? By faith unquestionably; for he served God faithfully as the father of the faithful long before Moses was heard of; and besides, it stands expressly written in the Jewish scriptures that Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. This instance shuts all mouths. Christian faith is not a mere matter of intellectual orthodoxy, but it is perfect trust and reliance on one entitled to command; and just as he is a good soldier who believes in his commander-in-chief, and follows him obediently in all things, so he is a good Christian who believes in God as the supreme director of human affairs, and in Christ as the declarer of His will. And so it is in all other matters. Politicians prevail by faith in the leader of their party; adventurers by faith in the man who started the adventure; explorers by faith in the captain of the exploring expedition; all mechanical workers, by faith in the Arkwright, or the Watt who opened the field for their operations.

So far we have had plain sailing; whatever the sects and the churches may babble and battle about orthodoxies and heterodoxies in matters intellectual or governmental, it is plain that the faith by which Christians are saved according to St. Paul is an essentially ethical faith, an implicit trust in the captain of that salvation which worketh by love, and approves itself by deeds. But now we come to more doubtful matters. In the middle part of his Epistle the great Apostle becomes metaphysical; and in dealing with sin finds himself drawn into the difficult question of the origin of evil, and the more difficult one of liberty and necessity in the formation of human purposes and the issue of human fates. In the fifth chapter, immediately after his triumphant proof that Abraham, the father of the Jews, was in spirit and power essentially a Christian believer, he reverts to his main proposition that all men are sinners, and can have no hope of salvation, if works are to found a claim; but in repeating it he lays down a doctrine with regard to the origin and issue of this moral deficiency, which at once brings into the foreground of the discussion some matters, as St. Peter has it, hard to be understood, and which certainly belong more to the region of speculative metaphysics than of practical piety. He traces the general sinfulness of human beings to the sin of the first father of the race, and death as the special penalty of sin, paid by the whole race, as the necessary sequence of the sinful taint which they inherit from their primal sire. Now, a

very slight reflection will serve to convince the pious reader that in every view this doctrine with regard to the origin and consequences of moral evil is contrary alike to historical fact and to our most sacred moral instincts. First, with regard to death, nothing can be more illogical than to seek for a special cause in the case of man, for a fact that is bound up with the universal face of life in its thousandfold exhibition on the stage of animated existence. Wherever there is life, there is death; the grass dies, the flower dies, the tree dies; the worm that creeps, and the bird that flies; every form and fashion of breathing creature, from the mite and the moth to the mammoth and the mastodon, as certainly as they come on the stage by the bright mystery of life, so certainly do they disappear into the darkness of death. Why not man? Does he not stand on the same vital basis as all other terrestrial life, by the vital conditions of air and food, and growth and decay; and why should he not die? It is illogical, therefore, to conclude that death came into the world by sin; it came into the world from a cause not far to seek; this, namely, that by disappearing from the stage existing creatures might make room for generation after generation to enjoy the blessing of life which otherwise had been confined to a few. Then as to sin; what is the cause of sin? how did this vile imperfection come into the world, the creation of a perfect God? Plainly because the finite creature is by its nature limited in capacity, fallible in pur-

pose, and feeble in self-control; so that sin belongs to his moral nature, as naturally and as unavoidably as error and delusion to the sphere of his intellectual action. There is another doctrine that seems to flow from St. Paul's metaphysics in this place, viz. that guilt can be inherited. This is a monstrous doctrine; no doubt the consequences of guilt may pass from father to son, and from son to grandson; a man may so weaken his nervous system by the excessive use of wine or other stimulant, that generation after generation shall suffer from the effects of their ancestor's offence; but this is a misfortune for which the sufferer receives the pity of the sympathetic beholder, not the blame. All guilt is personal; and as in the case of a rebellion—say the Highland rising of 1745—any government would be accounted savage and barbarous which should not only extirpate the real rebels, but prosecute with forfeiture and death the whole progeny of the original traitors through endless generations, so certainly the idea of making millions and billions and quadrillions of human beings pay the penalty of death for the sin of Adam is a conception fitted to extinguish all the risings of filial love in his human children to the great Father of the human family. Let any man of common moral instinct set such a God before him as an article of filial faith, and he will find it impossible to repeat "Our Father which art in Heaven" with any honest significance. What shall we say then? Did the Apostle of the gospel of divine love really present such a

hateful and abhorrent object of worship before the people whom it was his mission to convert by the transforming power of the gospel of love, or have we misinterpreted his text? Most sincerely do I wish that we could accept this latter alternative. Most assuredly he did mean what he says; but he was evidently led to this metaphysical paradox, partly from his acceptance of the first chapter of Genesis as the first link in a great chain of literally historical facts, whereas it is only a philosophico-theological scheme of the constitution of moral things in a historical form; and again, from a desire to contrast the shame of the world and the human family from Adam downwards with its glory under Christ, who in this view is looked upon as the father of a regenerate and restored world. This contrast has also been carried into our modern theological creeds, with which the imputed righteousness of Christ is as familiar a pulpit phrase as the guilt of Adam's first sin, and the inherited curse upon the whole human race. But righteousness, strictly speaking, can no more be imputed than guilt can be inherited. It is not by acts of formal imputation of the righteousness of the Saviour that Christians are rendered worthy of eternal life; it is by a living faith in a divinely commissioned teacher, manifested in the career of a Christ-like life of devotion to the cause of humanity and the offspring of a Divine Father. True it is as the most glorious fact in the whole history of man that the son of Mary gave His

life a ransom for many, and died both by and for their sins; but the language of Scripture, when using these phrases, and specially when, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it talks of Christ as a high priest, and His death as a sacrifice and an atonement, is to be taken not literally, but merely as a convenient adaptation to Jewish conceptions. To take such language literally is simply to ignore the whole style of religious teaching, which not only in the Gospel of John, but everywhere deals in allegory, similitude, and parable, not in metaphysical, argumentative, and scholastic dogma. And with regard to the main point of St. Paul's doctrine in this metaphysical side issue to his ethical evangel, it is some consolation to know that it belongs only in a secondary way to St. Paul, and that no trace of such a purely dogmatic treatment of the origin of evil from the father of the race, and the inherited curse from his primal sin, can be found in the whole body of devout belief, whether under the law or in the gospel texts. Nor is there any reason why this view of so abstract a point should be allowed to trench upon the respect due to the utterances of such an accomplished preacher of the gospel of grace as St. Paul. Whatever his accomplishments were, there is no reason to suppose that he could keep his mind altogether free from certain biases which belonged to him as a man who had breathed the breath of Talmudic tradition and Greek speculation in a fashion of which none of his fellow-apostles could

boast; and the very breadth of this intellectual equipment might lead him into a scholastic play of argument peculiar to himself, and altogether outside of his apostolic commission. In common life it is easy to distinguish between the direct purport say of a royal message, and the style in which it may have been presented by an enthusiastic and eloquent messenger; and so any theoretical misconceptions about the nature of the plan of salvation arising from the peculiar idiosyncrasy of St. Paul drop into the domain of superfluous side-play, when one sits reverently at the feet of Jesus, and feeds upon the divine simplicity of His words. In His preaching there is neither metaphysical subtlety, nor sacerdotal ceremony, nor legal formalism, but love rooted in reverential faith blossoming into active benevolence, and growing up into everlasting life.

We now come to the last point handled in the theologico-metaphysical section of this powerful Epistle; a point which, notwithstanding its specially abstract nature, has known to find for itself a conspicuous place not only in the polemics of Protestant Doctors, but in the personal experience of private Christians. The point is Predestination, a two-handed word, necessity on the one side and liberty on the other. The idea of the close connection of all things and their mutual interdependence flows necessarily from the conception of a first disposing cause from which all sequence must proceed, as necessarily as an arrow from the bow. It

is a conception, therefore, specially accentuated in all forms of monotheism, but it is not confined to them; as the use of the words Αἶσα, and Μοῖρα, and Μοῖραι, Fate and the Fates, in the Greek writers sufficiently proves. The fact is that, to a thoughtful mind under any system of religion, the feeling of human subordination in all matters, and divine superintendence, is so strong, as to the polytheistic Greek to have suggested the simile of a woven tissue, of which each thread is indissolubly intertwined with others in the composition of a whole, the character of which depends in no wise on the strain or tendency of the individual threads, but on the prescribing and directing power of the weaver. Hence the Fates, three in number, denominated Κλωθώ, Λάχεσις, and Ἄτροπος—the Spinster, the Portioner, and the Inflexible; and that this applies with minute accuracy to the life of man on earth as a whole, no man can doubt. For, in the first place, though we call ourselves persons, when compared one with another, in respect of our existence we are pure products, and the fashion of our existence with bone and flesh and nerve in a special bodily presentation is as absolutely dependent on a supreme creative power as the steam car that thunders along the rail is the creation of James Watt and the artificers that carry out his idea. Nor is it only in respect of our bodily machine, to adopt the simile, that we are what we are, the creatures of a divine foreordaining power. Our minds are predestined as well as our fleshly framework; our genius,

our tendencies, our capacities are given us, in a style and in a measure which we may not refuse, and which may in fact, as every day's experience amply proves, be traced back, through father and grandfather, mother and grandmother, and a long succession of generations, forming what we call types of family and national idiosyncrasy not to be ignored. And not only so in the direct line of descent from a typical ancestor; but we are what we are by an environment of circumstances, working daily and hourly upon us, from which we cannot escape. A Scot is a Scot, strong, stout, hardy, and steady, by virtue of a certain inherited temperament no doubt, but not less by the hardness, and the unkindliness, and the sourness of the sky under which he lives. Of course here, as in other influential forces, evil creates a good; the Scot becomes as hardy as his climate, and makes himself felt as a member of a working world, in not a few cases, where a sunny Neapolitan or merry Greek might fail; still in respect of his environment he had no choice. In his circumstances as in his blood he is the slave, not the master of his fate. What shall we say then? Is there no such thing as liberty in the human world? is man a mere machine, a piece of cunning engineering, with no more power over his motions than a puppet has over the wires by which his nimble tricks and antic motions are controlled? Not so; certainly not. Liberty in the case of human beings is a word as true as Necessity; it is only different in its range; just as we

may picture a great circle with a number of lesser circles within its circumference, each with a central action of its own, but all under the controlling influence of a resistless power in the periphery, just like a fish in a pool which may float about largely within the bounds of the pool, but from the structure of the confining embankment has no power to leap out of its liquid encasement, much less to change its scaly nature as a tenant of the watery element, and become a sea-gull to steer itself through the air, or a hen to pick its way through a farm-yard. There is no contradiction here. Every day's experience proves that a man may be perfectly free within a certain prescribed sphere, while beyond it he is and remains a perfect slave. But what does St. Paul say to the matter, and why does he enlarge so copiously on this curious point of theological metaphysics? Is it from a mere speculative curiousness to round off his argument against the self-righteous formalists with whom he had to do in the previous part of the discourse? Not at all. If he were to rise from the grave to-morrow, he would leave it to German professors to discuss such matters in their relation to theoretical man. He is a practical man to the backbone, a soldier who does battle for the cross, not a speculator who comes to discuss it. His concern with this great question is simply from its practical side; from the side of sentiment also, let us add, and noble emotion. It is his heart's desire to Israel, the yearning

of his soul for the salvation of his brethren according to the flesh that makes him feel their exclusion from the salvation of the gospel, and the non-election of the chosen people so strongly. That they were a chosen people, and had been elected to very peculiar graces, could not be denied ; to them belonged the adoption and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and from them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came ; and yet, in spite of all they had been, and all they had done, they were to be finally cast away, excluded from all fellowship with those Greeks and Romans who, in becoming Christians and inheritors of eternal life, only reaped the fruit of the seed that had been sown by the patriarchs and the lawgivers of the Jews. What could he say to this ? The mere thought of it stabbed him to the heart ; he could not reverse the fact, and as a pious man and a practical man he could only say that all are not Israel who were of Israel ; that God the great giver has a perfect right to dispense His gifts when and where and to whom He pleases ; and that His election could not be made void from any change in His eternal purpose, but simply from the rejection or the abuse of His gifts by those for whom they were intended. On this ground the Apostle, casting his eye on the blessed retrospect of Hebrew history, could only weep for them and pray for them ; the penalty for despising the Almighty's abounding grace can no more be avoided than a right to share in it can be

claimed; let them repent, and the door of grace may even yet be opened to all those who are Jews, not outwardly in the flesh, but inwardly in the spirit; and as for you of the Gentiles, he adds, who have profited so much by that grace which its original donees refused, know to profit by their example and fear to abuse those privileges, which now come in such unexpected overflow to you. Be not high-minded, but fear. Where grace reigns, boasting is excluded.

Only one point remains, on which a single sentence will suffice. St. Peter, in the passage from which our motto is chosen, speaks of certain persons, unlearned and unstable, who have perverted, to their own destruction, the teaching of his beloved brother Paul in this Epistle. What sort of persons were these, and what was the particular form of their perverseness? They belonged to three classes. First, those just mentioned as pre-eminently the high-minded men who indulged in the luxury of boasting of their privileges, instead of nursing a sacred fear lest they might be tempted to abuse them; second, those who despaired of grace, and from hopelessness of obtaining the favour of God, threw themselves in self-abandonment into the arms of the Evil One; and lastly, a class of persons eager to interpret the freedom from the penalty of sin preached by St. Paul as a freedom from the practice of virtue, and who thought that the indulgence of a few favourite sins could not prejudice the election of grace to which they

had been appointed by the foreknowledge and the predestination of the Great Disposer. Like a fond mother, they thought He would not be severe on His pets. These three sophistical abusers of his grand argument, only too obvious considering what stuff human sinners are made of, could not escape the vision of St. Paul, and so he disposes of them one by one in the way of formal argument with all seriousness; but perhaps at this time of day, when no person could dare to show his face as member of a Christian church who was openly guilty of such degrading vices as those persons whom we see denounced in such ample terms by St. Peter and by St. Jude, the best way to meet such practical abuses of speculative doctrines is that blunt fashion in which Zeno, the head of the Stoics, responded to one of his servants who had been guilty of an act of theft. The servant, as his biographer informs us, though no philosopher, knew enough of his master's teaching to have heard the word εἱμαρμένη, or Destiny, occupying a favoured place in the scheme of the philosopher's ethical terminology; so when his master lifted the scourge to serve his back with the penalty which his hand had earned, the offender forthwith cried out, "Why flog me? in the words of your own teaching I was predestined to steal." "Yes," said Zeno, "no doubt, but you were also predestinated to be flogged."[1] No breach of the moral law can be excused by a reference to the Supreme

[1] Diogenes Laertius, *Zeno*, vii. s. 23.

Lawgiver; for those very decrees which the offender pleads are framed on the principle that life is the school in which a moral being learns virtue, by the reward which accompanies the performance and the penalty which follows the transgression of the law.

VI

THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS

Of whom the world was not worthy.
HEBREWS xi. 38.

THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS

THE greatest misfortune that can happen to any people is to have no noble deeds and no heroic personalities to look back to; for as a wise present is the seed of a fruitful future, so a great past is the seed of a hopeful present. It is in this respect with peoples as with families. Nothing stands in the world unconnected with the past or unproductive of the future; and as certainly as it requires a peculiar virtue in the child to resist the evil influence of a worthless parentage, so certainly will that people require a double grace from Heaven in respect of future achievement which starts with no elevating memories from the past. But there is a greater misfortune than this, and not merely a misfortune but a crime—viz. to have had noble ancestors and to forget them; and this is a misfortune and a crime which, I am sorry to think, has happened and is happening in no small degree to stout old Scotland. I meet every day, for instance, with people, sensible, well-educated, and well-meaning people, in Scotland bred

and with Scottish blood in their veins, who know no more of the noble fathers of our spiritual liberty, the Covenanters, than they know of the social history of any outlying regions of medieval or modern Europe; nay, they know even less sometimes; for while a Polish Kosciusko or a Greek Miaulis may stand in the picture-gallery of their brain with a certain reputable regard, a Cameron and a Cargill, if they are names whose echo has asserted a place in their memorial records of the past, are names not of cherished heroism, but associated only with the type of an untutored obstinacy and a sour religiosity of which every healthy-minded man must be ashamed. How is this? The Scotch have not forgot Bannockburn, but not a few of them are willing to forget Drumclog. Why is this? Was our spiritual independence, asserted at Drumclog, a less important factor in our national character as a distinct people than our political independence achieved at Bannockburn and Stirling Bridge? Certainly not; as certainly as that a man's pocket and his property are not of more weight towards the formation of a manly character than his conscience. Then we repeat the question, how was this? Mainly because at Bannockburn the Scotch as a united people stood up as one man against a foreign invader, whereas at Drumclog Scotland was a divided people, one half, the nobler and the more Scottish half, fighting the baser and the Anglified half in the form of a stern civil war. The opening

up of the succession to the English throne, by the death of Elizabeth in 1603, though it had the outward show of a great glory to the northern kingdom, was in fact the first of a succession of severe blows which the faithless Stuarts aimed at our nationality. The Stuarts, whatever they were originally in their native seat, when transplanted to England were essentially a base race. No sooner had James I. got seated on his throne at Westminster than he thanked Heaven that he was no longer a Scot, and owed no duty to his native country except to remodel its rudeness as much as possible, after the type of the civilised metropolis on the banks of the Thames; and his idea of civilisation was like that of Edward Longshanks and his son, even that of conquest and subjugation. He was now free from the stout old barons and the stiff churchmen that checked his grasp of power in the north; he was now lord of a people of a more docile and facile respectability, and being so he determined to king it grandly. Accordingly he set himself with the Anglified Episcopising section of his courtiers who lived at his beck in London to govern Scotland on English principles, and gradually wean them from that sturdy independence both in civil and religious matters which made it so difficult for a despotic monarch to deal with them. Where there is a Court, a retinue of Court danglers will always be found ready to sell the honour of the realm to which they belong for the smiles of Court favour, and the places and

pensions that naturally follow it. So this crowned pedant, being naturally a coward and not willing to raise a positive civil war, contrived to bring together a picked lot of servile lords, who in the year 1606 smuggled into an essentially Presbyterian country a mongrel form of Church government, half Episcopalian and half Presbyterian, which in the eyes of the despotising monarch, showed fairly as the thin end of the wedge for introducing his courtly form of Church government into his native country, but which in fact only sowed the seed of those ecclesiastical dissensions which, commencing with the sacerdotal parade of his unfortunate son, ended in the bloody policy of his unprincipled grandson. A nation divided against itself cannot stand; and such was the unfortunate divorce of court policy from national feeling, in 1660, when Charles II. succeeded to the throne and the principles of his infatuated father, that a war could not but ensue between the Crown and the people, in which either, as in Austria the Pope that ruled in Vienna prevailed to crush the Protestantism that was budding in Bohemia, so the sacerdotal Church in England would succeed in trampling out the popular parity of the Presbyterian Church in the north; or the people, rising up in the full strength of devout manhood, would drive both crowned monarch and mitred priest back into the soft regions from which they came, and assert triumphantly their native right of marching Godward without orders from an earthly monarch, and reading

their own Bibles with their own eyes without any enforced spectacles from an English priest. And this most noble and most glorious victory of spiritual independent popular conscience over sacerdotal dictation was gained by the fifty years' struggle of the Scottish Covenanters.

Why then, to recur to the question with which we started, why then are they forgotten, if not, indeed, thank Heaven, by the mass of the people, yet significantly enough by not a few? Principally, I think, from these causes: First, the Episcopal section of the people, though, after the revolution settlement in 1688, indisputably a small body of dissenters in a distinctively Presbyterian country, could not but look on the Covenanters as godless deniers of a divinely sanctioned sacerdotalism; and as not a few of them belonged to the upper and upper middle class of society, their view of the great historical struggles in which Scotland had been engaged from the Reformation onwards, could not but exercise a certain contagious influence on that class of persons who are accustomed to look to social position rather than to reason and right in their estimate of public questions. Some of them also, though the day was past for prevailing with the sword, could wield the pen, and paint the historical page in such fashion as to hold up our noble army of covenanted martyrs as a rude rabble of sour religionists, equally remote from the dignity of a clerical aristocracy and the graces of a

gentlemanly worship. This sort of talk, of course, could have no slight effect with those persons found here and there in all associations of human beings with whom dress and a certain play of polished phrase are of more weight in the formation of a gentleman than nobility of character or manliness of conduct. But this style of elegantly traducing the assertors of our Scottish spiritual independence was a mere loose drift in comparison of the fatal blow which our nationality received by the union, not simply of the crowns as in 1603, but of the kingdoms under Queen Anne in 1707. Not that such union in itself was undesirable; far from it. It was only right that two peoples using the same language, bounded by the same seas, and shaking hands in familiar intercourse across the same river, should take their stand before the world as an undivided empire; two separate kingdoms united like two brothers under a common family name, or, to borrow a parallel from commercial life, two partners in a common business acting together with distinct and well-defined personal rights. And in so far this ideal of a fair and equitable union was realised in the Scottish Act of 1707. By that Act Scotland retained its separate Church, its separate law courts, and its characteristic system of school training; but one important element was left out in the account; our laws we might retain: but our legislation went to London. The great metropolis on the banks of the Thames was henceforth to be the centre

of governmental power and legislative control not only for England and English purposes, and for British and Imperial purposes, but for the Scottish kingdom and for Scottish purposes. This was manifestly a most unfair and most unequal bargain, and tending directly gradually to weaken and finally to annihilate all independent Scottish life like a body with the head cut off, though the heart might still beat with Scottish pulses. How was this most unfair conclusion come to? Simply from the power that has often worked so potently in political matters—simply because traitors were many and honest men were few. In spite of the protest of Fletcher of Salton and other noble fellow-protesters, Scotland was sold in that Parliament by a company of English Court-danglers, men trained in the school of those whom a great historian characterises as of an unblushing shamelessness, and a venal servility unsurpassed in the history of legislation;[1] and by such base instrumentality the ancient kingdom of Scotland, with its noble army of patriots that had made it famous in the annals of European manhood, was put before the historic Muse in the attitude of deliberately cutting off its own head to such effect that the ancient city in which the Alexanders and the Jameses of the noblest epochs of our history held their seat, was thenceforward no more the capital of Scotland than Birmingham or York is of England. How such a system must work in undermining the

[1] Macaulay, c. xiii.

foundations of national feeling in Scotland need not be stated in detail. Though the mass of the people remained faithful to old Edinburgh and John Knox, all who took a prominent part in public business, as politicians or statesmen, all who either were somebody, or wished to seem somebody, with wigs or without them, looked up to London and Canterbury, not to Edinburgh and Drumclog.

So much for the lamentable change in the political position of our beloved native country, brought about by the ignoble nobility who cunningly concocted the union so called, but which practically has gradually been working now for nearly two centuries as an absorption of Scotland into England. But there were also forces of native growth at work tending to make Scotland with every generation less Scotch, and specially to dethrone her noblest heroes from their due seat in the popular memory. Much has been said, and said deservedly, in praise of the traditional Scottish as contrasted with the traditional English education from the Reformation downwards. To the intimate union of Presbyterian pulpits with Presbyterian schools we owe, no doubt, that intellectual superiority of the ordinary Scot over the ordinary Englishman, which all who know the peasantry of both countries willingly allow. But this superiority concerns only the mass of the lower and middle classes of society. On the platform of the highest education, Scotland is as far below England

in some important branches of learning as it is below Germany in the rich variety, large catholicity, and profound research of its intellectual range. Our Universities are not only narrow in their range, but they stand altogether without either foundation or superstructure; for the foundation of a University education is a middle school, and its superstructure a well-endowed system of scholarships and fellowships which may afford to the young academician the biennial and triennial period of intellectual repose which is absolutely necessary for the successful prosecution of the higher branches of learning. What are we to think of the Universities of a country, in which after two or three years of beating through Greek and Latin books, the platform of a bad middle school was made compulsory on all as a step to academical honours, while not a single professor opened the view of the young Scot to the inspiring scenes of military daring and heroic martyrdom with which our national story abounds? The consequence of this low standard and meagre furnishing of our highest seats of learning has been, first, that a young man may take the degree of M.A. who may not know the difference between St. Columba, the founder of our Scottish churches, and Columbus, the discoverer of America; and again, that when a young Scottish Hellenist begins to show such an appetite for Greek, as to give hope that the elementary brambles in that field may one day produce berries, he is straightway sent

to Oxford, where he will learn many good things no doubt, but certainly return, if he ever do return to Scotland, more inclined to spin sentimental threnodies in praise of Claverhouse who died fighting for Popish James at Killiecrankie, than to sing the Seventy-sixth Psalm with young Hamilton and his noble army of Covenanters who beat the same Claverhouse at Drumclog.

After this cursory glance at the causes which have contributed to throw a shade over the brilliant exploits of those devoted men to whom Scotland owes as much in the field of religion as to Bruce and Wallace in matters secular, the way is now clear for a rapid sketch and a fair estimate of their achievements in that fifty years' struggle which taught the three Stuarts in such significant style that the title of king, whatever it might mean in Turkey, in Britain certainly did not mean a master, and that in Scotland not less certainly a subject did not mean a slave.

The fifty years' struggle for freedom of conscience, which has laid Scotland under such a deep debt of gratitude to our heroic ancestors, dates properly from 1638, when the Solemn League and Covenant in defence of the Presbyterian Church, already sanctioned by King James I. in the Act of the Scottish Parliament, 1593, was signed by the most influential public men of the time, in the Greyfriars' Churchyard, and extends to the familiar date of the glorious Revolution of 1688, under the guaranteed supremacy of

William and Mary. But there was a little incident in the start of this noble struggle a year before the formal swearing to the Magna Charta of our national Church, which, though it can readily be made to assume a humorous turn in song, was in fact a very significant and emphatic prelude to the great drama which followed. This was the well-known outburst of national indignation, in the person of a woman called Janet Geddes, and in the shape of a stool, which she flung at the head of the reverend gentleman who was officiating as the reader of an English liturgy in the principal church of Presbyterian Scotland. To a mere liturgy as a printed form of public prayer neither Mrs. Janet Geddes, or whatever her name was, nor any other sensible Scottish person of the more emotional sex, would have made any such rude protest; but it was not so much the service-book, as its manufacture in England under Episcopal action, and its imposition on Scotland by the dictatorial despotism of the head of the State intruding into matters with which the State has nothing to do, that roused the mettle of the indignant dame. Her instinct in this matter was in fact the first note of the great civil war, which two years later broke out in England, and ended, after a bloody contest of ten years, in forcing the infatuated Stuart to pay the penalty with his own head for his high-handed intrusion into the sacred heart of his people. If in England his offence was more against the political than the ecclesi-

astical liberty of the people, this only made his offence on the Scotch side of the question the more serious; and the revolt of the stool might have taught him, if anything could have taught the son of a foolish father, to acknowledge practically in the performance of his secular function what that text means, where it is written, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." But this text from the mouth of the Son of God, like not a few others, was too high above the level of mortals wearing crowns to be understood by the European kings of the seventeenth century. The instinct of a poor woman, sitting at a stall in the High Street and selling apples to schoolboys, knew better; and so, while Charles was rewarded for his temerity in meddling with spiritual matters by the title of "martyr," conferred on him by the adulators of his princely conceit, Dame Geddes, on the spot where she flung the prophetic stool, speaks to the ear of patriotic record in these true words:—

AT OR NEAR THIS SPOT
A BRAVE SCOTTISH WOMAN,
BY PROTESTING AGAINST
THE FORCIBLE INTRODUCTION
OF THE ENGLISH LITURGY
INTO THIS CHURCH,
LAID THE FOUNDATION
OF CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
FOR THESE ISLANDS.

Into the details of the great English civil

war which broke out in 1639, and ended with the decapitation of the crowned offender in 1649, and the period of the Commonwealth and Protectorate immediately following, which ended in 1660 by the restoration of Charles II. to his father's throne, our present subject does not require us to enter. It is with the results of that struggle that the tragic story of our heroic Covenanters more properly commenced. That the Scottish people should enter into alliance with their English neighbours in a common struggle against the union of sacerdotal and secular despotism in the person of Charles I. was only natural; equally natural that when, after the battle of Naseby, he fled to the Scottish camp for protection against his English antagonists, they should hand him over to the party with whom he had more directly to do. When, however, it came to extremes, and the English, under the stern captainship of Cromwell, proceeded with a grand sweep of coercive power to put an end at one stroke at once to the old English hereditary kingship and the life of the king, the native loyalty of the Scottish people, combined with the Presbyterian aversion to the extreme individualism of the English Independents under the leadership of Cromwell, caused Scotland to disclaim the policy of the English Republicans, and put the reins of State into the hands of the son of the great offender. Charles II. was accordingly recalled from Holland, whither he had retired after the execution of his father, and

under the presidency of the Marquis of Argyll in the year 1651 crowned king of Scotland at Scone. The Marquis, however, and the Scottish people, knowing with whom they had to do, did not put themselves under the headship of the son of Episcopal Charles and the grandson of Episcopising James without a guarantee. In public assembly at Scone, and under solemn appeal to Almighty God, Charles swore to be truly the native father, not the foreign master, of his people, and to respect the right of personal conscience in his subjects as loyally as they had acknowledged his right of succession to the throne. How these vows were kept we shall see anon. Charles was an altogether worthless character. He did not know what truth meant, and was as ready to play with false oaths when they served his need as gamblers to play with loaded dice. He did not know that though a man may tell a lie in an extreme case to save an innocent brother's life, no man worthy of a brotherly greeting would tell a lie to win a crown for himself. The world stands upon Truth, as a tree grows from its root.

But if Charles excelled in baseness and in lies, the Scottish people, when he was proclaimed in Edinburgh, welcomed him with a display of vociferous and rampant loyalty which might help to deceive the soul of such a shallow Sardanapalus into the belief that after all the body of the people had no stern faith in their Presbyterian order, and would gladly receive an Episcopal priesthood and an English liturgy at his desire. Of course he

would readily find not a few of the ignoble nobility of the age willing, for the love of power, and also possibly with a side-glance at their pockets, to desert a cause which they had espoused for a season, more from political and personal considerations than from a deep-seated religious conviction. Accordingly Charles found little difficulty in commencing his reign, which can only be termed a continuous war against the conscience and honour of Scotland, by one of the basest acts of ingratitude that ever marked the blood-stained records of political contention. He trumped up a charge of high treason against the Marquis of Argyll, the very man who, as we have seen, received him when he was a homeless outlaw from his native England, and put the crown of a Presbyterian people upon his head. After this it was easy to pick up an untitled clergyman and scholar, and execute him as a criminal, and hang up his head on the Nether Bow port, Edinburgh, for the sole crime of having preached against the despotism of the hierarchy, and maintained publicly that with the great majority of the unbribed Scottish people he could find no bishop, but only Presbyters, in the apostolic practice of the first Christian Church. But the dignity of the Crown and a decent regard for public feeling required that, to this sacrifice of individual victims, a public sanction should be given, by an Act of the Scottish Parliament, declaring open war against the religious liberty of the Scottish people, and arming the monarch with the sword of

merciless persecution against whosoever should dare to think otherwise on sacred subjects than his Majesty pleased. Subservient creatures of Sharp's type were easily found; and accordingly an Act of a Parliament holden at Edinburgh in January 1661, and another in the second session of the same first Parliament of Charles II., declared in no doubtful terms his Majesty's intention to stamp out by brute force under polite hands the historical religion of the country to which he had pledged his honour. The wording of both these Acts was sufficiently significant and prophetic of the bloody scenes that followed through the whole reign of this lawless self-pleaser, to the expulsion of the treacherous and tyrannical line of the Stuarts in the person of James II. In the first of these Acts, an Act concerning Religion and Church Government, as we read, his Majesty declares, in direct opposition to his oath at Scone, that it is his full and firm resolution to maintain the true Protestant religion in its purity of doctrine and worship as it was established within this kingdom during the reign of his royal grandfather of blessed memory; and as to the government of the Church, his Majesty will make it his care to settle and secure the same in such a frame as shall be most agreeable to the Word of God, and most suitable to monarchical government, and most complying with the public peace and quiet of the kingdom. Of course by this he means Episcopacy, quite in the spirit of his foolish grandfather of despotic memory, who, how-

ever he might have disported himself in the year 1593 with his Danish bride beside him in a fit of honeymoon humour, always acted on the principle of "no bishop no king"—the bishop being at his right hand to stamp with the sacred name of God whatever tyrannous decree might come forth from the profane will of the monarch. In the other Act, 8th May 1662, entitled "An Act for the restitution and establishment of the ancient government of the Church by archbishops and bishops," the preamble distinctly approves the usurpation of right in spiritual matters by the State, against which it was the great glory of our Covenanting forefathers manfully to protest, and in the long run triumphantly to prevail. The words are: "Forasmuch as the ordering and disposition of the external government of the Church doth properly belong unto his Majesty as an inherent right of the Crown by virtue of his royal prerogative and supremacy in all causes ecclesiastical." This doctrine of the supremacy of the State in the matter of Church government might be maintained speciously enough by men who had been born and bred under the traditions of the pre-Reformation age, but in a man who owed his crown and his life, when wandering as a homeless refugee, to the loyalty of his Presbyterian subjects, was beyond all precedent base.

This enactment of high-handed State-despotism would have been ridiculous had it not been followed by deeds as decided as the words of the enactment were unqualified

When proclaimed at Glasgow, three hundred and fifty ministers, with their congregations, left their pulpits, choosing rather to deliver the Gospel message on the free slopes of their natives braes, without shelter and without display, than in gilded halls with a commission from men whom they could not but look on as the mitred slaves of an unholy usurpation. They shook the dust from their feet as they left the floor of their dear loved House of God to the tread of the intrusive Episcopalian, and the heart of Scotland went with them. Long years must pass, and streams of blood would flow, before the native right of a betrayed people should be able to assert itself against the strong arm of treacherous kingcraft; but the seed of unrighteousness when sown will bear a fruit in judgment; God is not mocked; and the sighs and groans of an oppressed people not rising in vain will, in the ripeness of the years, rouse the heart and nerve the arm of the Avenger.

The first notable outbreak of the slumbering wrath of the nation had its origin in the west, the sacred territory of Scottish Church liberties, and ended amid blood and tears most lamentably in the green hollows of the Pentland Hills, near Edinburgh, trending from the Lothians towards Peeblesshire and Lanarkshire on the south. In the west and southwest of Scotland, where the true pulse of the Scottish heart beat most strongly, bands of soldiers had been sent by the Government to keep watch over the discontented peasantry,

and specially to see to it that all the fines and penalties that followed the non-acceptance of compulsory Episcopacy should be duly collected. In performing this function they of course, as the servile instruments of a hated despotism, comported themselves in no very kindly fashion, and on one occasion they behaved with such heartless violence to a poor old man of the covenanting party as to rouse the vituperative wrath of his neighbours, and strike out a spark of resistance to the reigning despotism which speedily burst into a flame. In the mountainous neighbourhood of Kirkcudbright and Dumfries a regular insurrection was organised, followed by a march through Lanark and Bathgate to Rullion Green in the Pentland Hills, about eight miles south of Edinburgh. In making this march eastward, with minds well furnished with the sacred memory of John Knox and the Greyfriars Churchyard, they no doubt expected that the people of the country would rise up at their appearance and shake the tyrant from his blood-cemented throne; but they were mistaken. A sudden popular uprising, however strong in patriotic emotion, is always weak in the face of a regularly organised government. Edinburgh besides, in the year 1666, when this movement took place, was more in the power of servile courtiers and merciless lawyers than in any sense a representative of Scottish rights and Scottish sentiment. Accordingly we find that this premature attempt to shake off the bloody yoke of intrusive Episcopacy,

instead of a brilliant start for the coming wave of popular indignation against lawless authority, ended in a fearful overthrow. Though generaled by a gentleman of a good Ayrshire family, the stout band of the patriotic insurrectionists could not prevail against the superior numbers of the Government army, headed as it was by a man, Dalzell of Binns, in West Lothian, the natural violence of whose character had been trained to a tiger-like ferocity in foreign warfare between Muscovites and Turks in the East. The brave soldiers of the Cross were beaten at Rullion Green, and their defeat was forthwith followed by one of those barbarous executions in which the heartless loyalty of that servile Parliament delighted. Eleven of the prisoners taken at the battle were tried for high treason, found guilty, and ordered to be hanged at the Cross, and their heads and right arms to be cut off. But this was not enough. The victors must needs wreak their vengeance on one of the least guilty of what they deemed a guilty act, one who had no doubt travelled with the insurgents from the west country, but who was in such weak health that he took no share in the battle, and left the army at Colinton to seek repose in his father's house at Liberton. The name of this victim was Hugh M'Kail, a young man under thirty years of age, handsome in person, accomplished in learning, and powerful in speech. But these qualifications were just such as made him much beloved by the people and most obnoxious to

the ignoble nobles of King Charles's court. Young men of ability are always most potently stirred by the passions which belong to noble manhood, and are most fearless in flinging the bolts of a noble indignation against the titled mercenaries of an enslaving dynasty; and if to these graces of soul a bodily presentment is added, in which the dignity of the lion is united with the sweetness of the dove and the grace of the antelope, the eye of the sympathetic spectator will not be slow to recognise behind the human mask of the adverse party the diabolical compound of vulpine cunning and tigrine ferocity. The grand offence of young M'Kail, who was a clergyman and a preacher, seems to have been that, like the prophets of the Hebrew times, he was not afraid to speak God's truth in the face of man's lies; and so in one of his sermons in Edinburgh, following out the train of thought in St. Paul's famous chapter xi. to the Hebrews, he said the pious people had no reason to be surprised at their suffering persecution; for in all ages this was a trial the faithful servants of God had to endure, whether from a Pharaoh on the throne, a Haman in the Council, or a Judas in the Church. The meaning of this in those times was too obvious to be mistaken. The young preacher with the fearless heart and the telling tongue was seized and brought before the Privy Council, and exposed to the excruciating torture of the boot. His legs were broken, but his spirit stood; he had nothing to con-

fess except that he believed in the Bible and not in the bishops. And so he was tried and condemned to death for high treason, and executed in due form on the 22nd December of that misfortuned year. His last words on the scaffold were "*Farewell father, farewell mother, farewell friends—welcome Heaven, welcome glory, welcome death!*" He spoke, and tears of bitter sorrow dropt copiously from the eyes of the beholders; tears which, falling into the soil of leal Scottish hearts, were the dew from which at no distant date a rich crop of patriotic manhood and divine retribution was to grow.

The public sympathy with the sufferers in these scenes of State butchery, coupled no doubt with the popular contempt for the actors in such tragedies, led shortly afterwards to a change of policy in the persecuting Government; but as they still stuck to the priestly postulate that the head of the State is by divine right the head of the Church, the change to a more mild policy on the part of an essentially unauthorised dictatorship could not reconcile the parties. The so-called Indulgence Act, passed in the year 1669, in its very name implies a reserved absolute right which for the nonce the party in power were willing for the sake of peace to renounce; it was in the form of a permission to the ousted ministers to act as ministers in the places from which they had gone forth, under certain limitations and marked social disadvantages, which allowed the legal status and the secular privileges to

remain with the Episcopalians. By conditions of this kind of course only the baser and the looser style of Presbyterians could be moved. They consented to serve under the existing law, as barely tolerated, with the stamp of servility on their forehead. But the mass of Presbyterian dissent was made of nobler stuff. They could accept of no terms from a treacherous kingcraft any more than the Apostle Paul could have accepted a firman to preach from the Scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites of Jerusalem. They would preach in the free fields, and breathe free air uncontaminated by the breath of courtly servility and monarchical assumption that possessed the churches; and they would pour out freely their prayers from a full breast, as the time and the circumstances might demand, not acting as mere recitative puppets to the wires of a sacerdotal scribe in London.

This of course could not be understood by the hireling courtiers and high-handed rulers of the day. Matters went on from bad to worse for ten years more; pious people would persist in having a free gospel preached on their native heath; and though no overt act of rebellion was committed, the hatred of sacerdotal tyranny grew every year more fretful and feverish in their breasts, and they were forced in self-defence to arm themselves with daggers as well as with psalm-books when they held their Sunday services on the hills. This of course was treason; and, though it would not do to hang up at every road-crossing the head of a godly young man who had dared to follow the example

of M'Kail in preferring a sentence from St. Paul to a statute of Lauderdale, yet no opportunity was lost of making the life of every Scotsman unendurable who dared to have a conscience for himself in the face of an unprincipled and unscrupulous government. Thus in lack of other servants to carry out his tyrannical will, Lauderdale, who in the year 1671 swayed the counsels of the Episcopising Parliament, hired an army of rude Highland caterans to come down and pillage and plunder the pious peasantry of Ayrshire without mercy and without appeal, as the wolves come down upon the sheep. Such monstrous inversion of his sworn duty by the State-shepherd could not but render a loyal people like the Scotch more impatient and more ready to re-enact at all risks the embattled array at Rullion Green than live to have their most holy convictions scorned, and their most sacred rights trampled on by a band of titled traitors and legalised murderers. Accordingly the seed was sown by the invasion of this Highland host, which ripened in two years afterwards into the glorious victory of Drumclog. But before the trumpet was formally sounded for this proud conflict, an incident took place which warned the murderous Government with a bloody significance what treatment they might expect from an exasperated people when the hour of retribution should arrive. This incident was the assassination of Archbishop Sharp on the well-known site of Magus Muir on the common in the north-west corner of the parish of St. Andrews, as he was driving

with his daughter in his carriage to the seat of his savage supremacy by the sea. The details of this incident, one of the most striking scenes in the sad tragedy of Covenanting self-defence, are so well known that they need not be repeated here. Sufficient to say that the affair was accidental, no part of the plan of the party in whose name it took place, but not the less significant, and not the less instructive in the lesson which it taught to all wielders of supreme power, who substitute violence for law, and lies for truth, in the programme of their public life. Had Sharp been a man of honour, and a Christian gentleman, however honestly we may charitably suppose him to have joined himself to the English Episcopalians, he would have said: "My countrymen north of the Tweed have as much right to read Presbytery out of the Bible as I have Episcopacy; they do not interfere with my rendering of the sacred text; and I have no right to interfere with theirs. Let Charles, a trifler and a pleasure hunter, perform what pranks may suit his lawless humour, at full swing; but I am a Christian priest and a minister of God's gospel of peace, and can have nothing to do with a policy, which in kinship not with Christ, but with the Neros and Diocletians of Pagan times, commences with the assumption of a spiritual power in matters which can belong to no secular authority, and ends in the persecution and death of the most faithful servants of God, and the most loyal subjects of the king, that the country can boast." But Sharp did not say this; he was

more, perhaps, an ambitious prelate than an honest Episcopalian; and the prominent part which he played in the venal legislation which led to the murder of so many of the best and most noble-minded Scotsmen of his age, might have taught him not to be surprised if one day a sword drawn in the cause of popular freedom might strike him with the same mortal force as that which he had helped to wield so mercilessly in the service of courtly preferment. Assassination, no doubt, is the term by which the manner of his bloody exit from this earthly stage must be designated; but there are two kinds of assassination, that from personal spite and jealousy, as in the case of Joab's stabbing of Abner (2 Sam. iii. 27); and that from the outburst of a noble indignation of loyal subjects against a ruler who has abused his kingship, or his priesthood, by deeds which, when stamped with their right name, could have been done, not by the grace of God, but of the devil and his angels. For myself, as a man, and with the full conviction that the murder of the prelate, though perhaps unwise in policy, and wisely not acknowledged by the leaders of the Covenanting parties, was both noble in purpose and justified in the circumstances; and I adhere literally to the words which I wrote when footing it over the bloody ground some forty years or more,

> Lament who will the surplice rent
> And mitre trampled low,
> Not all are murderers who kill,
> The cause commends the blow.

Sharp kissed the sod in the month of May 1679; and his death seemed to have acted like a spur to raise the devout patriots of the west to make a display of their unsubdued determination to read the Bible with their own eyes in a more soldierly and less objectionable fashion. On the 1st of June they massed themselves on the right bank of a rivulet in Avondale that flows through marshy ground into the Clyde, some thirty miles south-east of Glasgow; and, though under the command of a man inexperienced in the art of war, young Hamilton of Preston, they crossed the burn under such an overpowering moral inspiration, singing the Seventy-sixth Psalm,

> In Judah God is known: his name
> Is great in Israel,

that the greatest soldier of the time, Graham of Claverhouse, who advanced with his dragoons from the east, saw them break their ranks and fly in confusion with their back to the foe; and Claverhouse himself was forced to follow with the rest, his horse disembowelled with a pitch-fork. This was a great success; a success which deservedly entitles Drumclog to rank with Bannockburn, as winning for our spiritual life that independence which the sword of Bruce gained for our political estate on the banks of the Bannock. The 1st of June 1679 and the 24th of June 1314 are two dates without which, in the dearest shrine of his historical memory, no devoutly stamped man has a right to call himself a Scotsman any

more than a house without a fireside, or a firmament without the sunshine. The only difference between the two is, that while the struggle for political liberty was finished for ever by that one decisive stroke beneath the shadow of Stirling Castle, the victory over our ecclesiastical invaders, at Drumclog, was only one of a series of stern blows that after a protracted strain of fifty years at length prevailed to drive the crowned traitors from the throne. Had Scotland at the glorious date of Drumclog possessed a Cromwell,—one man of strong will, decided purpose, and instinct of military command,—in that case the defeat of Claverhouse on the banks of the Avon would have settled the national account with Charles II. as decidedly as the sword of Bruce and Randolph at Bannockburn sent Edward II. back to his English home on the south side of the Tweed. But alas! it could not be so; at Bothwell Brig, which followed in the train of Drumclog, divided counsels, as in war they inevitably must do, caused defeat. On the 22nd day of the same month that witnessed Claverhouse retracing his steps in hasty flight from Avondale, Monmouth ploughed a bloody path for hundreds of captured Covenanters to pine for months in the cold churchyard of the Greyfriars in Edinburgh, where forty years before the sacred bond of the Covenant had been sworn, thence to be kennelled in convict ships, and sold into slavery beyond the seas! Thus ended the third act of this woeful tragedy; but the final victory of faith over fraud, and right

over might was only delayed, not doubtful. There were men, in Scotland not a few, who, in the spirit of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, knew to hope against hope, and who would rather die confronting the blood-thirsty tyrant than live as the slave; and the greatest of these was Richard Cameron.

This self-devoted martyr of Scottish Presbytery, whose chivalrous achievements on behalf of the Covenanters hold the same place in the record of those times that the dashing exploits of the Marquis of Montrose do in the annals of the Episcopising party—this noble Cameron was born at Falkland, in Fife, the son of a respectable merchant there. In his youth he belonged to the Episcopal Church; but very soon after his entering on manhood, being of a thoughtful nature, he began to look curiously into the history of the Church under the brutal government of Middleton and Lauderdale, and after serious study became convinced that those who accepted the bribe of the indulgence were traitors to the Scottish Church; and he accordingly left the communion of the curates, and found the spiritual nutriment for which his soul hungered in the ministrations of the field preachers. This manly independence of soul in the matter of religion naturally gave great offence to those who took their side in ecclesiastical matters from a Royal ordinance, rather than from a Scripture text; and they proceeded forthwith to do everything in the way of sacerdotal dictation to make his life in his native district vexatious and intolerable. He

therefore wisely determined to leave a district where a man was not allowed to live in peace with a manly conscience, and seek the possibility of an independent life in the free atmosphere of the borders. He travelled south, and took service with Scott of Harden in the north-west corner of Roxburghshire. But here also the worldly element of the Indulgence followed him as a fret in the smooth flow of his spiritual life. His master, Sir William, and his lady had both accepted the more lenient terms to Presbyterian dissent offered by the Indulgence; and it seemed to them quite natural that the person who performed secular duty for them on the week days should be part of their family following in the spiritual service of the Sabbath. But Cameron had a conscience that could not allow him to trifle with his serious convictions in this matter; so instead of the indulged church, he stayed at home on Sunday, and, reading the Bible prayerfully in his own chamber, became more and more convinced of the sinfulness of State intrusion into the affairs of the Church. He accordingly set forth the matter fully to his employer, and was rewarded for his honesty by dismissal from his service. He then travelled farther south, and meeting with the Reverend John Welch, a distinguished minister of the Covenanters, in Kirkcudbright, by him was persuaded to enter the Church as a preacher of the true gospel, unhampered by State restriction, and took his licence from a Presbytery of the ousted ministers. Thus

equipped, he preached the gospel of a Church owing no headship but that of its divine Master in various districts of Annandale, Galloway, and Ayr; but the plain and unqualified terms in which he denounced from the pulpit the sinfulness of complying with State enactments in religious matters, gave offence to some of the indulged clergy in Nithsdale to such a degree that he found it advisable, about the end of the year 1679, to retire to Holland, where he could open his mouth freely in the company of the banished worthies of the Covenant, who had found a refuge from persecution in the Free States of the Low Countries. Here he received a regular ordination, and when their hands were lifted up over his head, in the beginning of the year 1680, he returned to his native shores, with the pious purpose to do as the Lord might give him opportunity, in the great work of lifting up the National Standard which had been trampled on so tragically at Bothwell Brig. Nor had he long to wait. On the 22nd June of the same year, the day of the anniversary of that ill-starred encounter at Bothwell Bridge, the people of Sanquhar, amid the quiet surroundings of their brown hills, were startled by a tramp of horses galloping at full speed right up to the Market Cross in the middle of the Square. They opened their eyes with eager quest and strange alarm, direct to the troop of armed horsemen, in whom in their times they might readily expect to see the royal dragoons, whose function it was to scour

the country and disperse the conventicles of a free people, who would persist in reading their Protestant Bibles without any government stamp upon the page. But it was not so. It was not Claverhouse come to blot out, on the banks of the Nith, with a bloody surprise, the shame that had covered his retreat from Drumclog. It was Richard Cameron who, with his brother Michael at his side, after singing a psalm and offering up a prayer, planted himself before the Cross, in the face of a multitude of sympathetic hearers, and read the following declaration: "We for ourselves, and all that will adhere to us as the representatives of the true Presbyterian Kirk, and covenanted nation of Scotland, considering the great hazard of lying under such a sin any longer, do by these presents disown Charles Stuart that has been reigning or rather tyrannizing on the throne of Britain these years bygone, as having any right to or interest in the crown of Scotland, for government, as forfeited several years since by his perjury, and breach of covenant both to God and his Kirk, and usurpation of his crown and royal prerogatives therein, and many other breaches in matters ecclesiastical, and by his tyranny and breach of the very *leges regnandi* in matters civil. For which reason we declare a war with such a tyrant and usurper, and all the men of his practices, as enemies to our Lord Jesus Christ, and his cause and covenant." And after affixing in printed form the words of this brave protest to the Cross, he offered up a short

prayer, and forthwith rode away, himself and his brother and twenty armed horsemen that were in his train, into the wild mountain retreats of freedom from which he came.

Such was the famous Sanquhar declaration, an event which stands as prominently before the patriotic Scottish eye as the battle of Prestonpans, some sixty years afterwards, did in the eyes of the Jacobite party; significant both of them of what a glowing enthusiasm, and a chivalrous devotion can do to lift up a falling cause, but altogether diverse in the result. The splendid dash of sentimental loyalty to a worthless race that began so brilliantly in the summer of 1745, ended at the beginning of the next year in the defeat of the ill-advised princeling and the ruin of the Gaelic chiefs who had been foolish enough to draw the sword in favour of a forfeited right and a shallow sentimentality; while the Sanquhar declaration was and remained the prelusive note to the victory of truth over lies, and right over wrong, on which all Britain looks back with gratitude in the glorious Revolution of 1688. No doubt this daring deed of the son of a Falkland merchant, with twenty men at his back, has the air of what may be called romance about it, which the wise men of the time might interpret as rashness, and the worldly-minded might stigmatise as pure madness; but the event plainly showed that neither the motive of the act was a mere dreamy conceit nor the result a fruitless fancy. On the contrary, as certainly as the stool of

Dame Geddes, in 1637, was, as we have seen, the sure presage of the great civil war which led to the decapitation of the ill-starred Charles in 1649, so certainly did the bold and manly declaration of the rights of the people, published by this brave soldier preacher, give an unmistakable hint to the English nation of the principle on which the Popish James was to forfeit his throne, as the priest-ridden Charles had forfeited his life. Unquestionably no man of common prudence in the common course of affairs would have ventured to pluck the beard of a reigning sovereign in the fashion that Cameron did at Sanquhar; but the times in which this bold man of Fife lived were no common times, and the king who wore the crown was no common offender; nor was Cameron a man who would shrink from striking a patriotic stroke at crowned treachery because it was morally certain that with his life he must pay the penalty of his boldness. In fact, it could not be otherwise. After the terrible prostration of the patriotic party of the nation at Bothwell Bridge, there was neither bone nor brain in the party to make a successful stand against the stout array of the regular army; and accordingly, only a month afterwards, when the great soldier preacher had paid his last adieu to the persecuted peoples in one or two parishes in the neighbourhood, he fell at Aird's Moss, on the muir a few miles east of Cumnock, a willing victim to the superior force of the royal army under Bruce of Earlshall. After this battle

Edinburgh, as usual, from its position as the seat of government, performed the unenviable duty of treating with every possible indignity the bodies, living or dead, of Scotland's most noble sons. Cameron's head and hands were cut off and taken to Edinburgh, and "there," cried the bearer of this shameful prize of war, as he delivered them up to the officials of the Council, "there is the head of a man who lived praying and preaching, and died praying and fighting." Thus he died; and ill will it fare with Scotland when she forgets to couple the name of Richard Cameron with that of Robert Bruce and John Knox as the noblest assertors of her national independence.

It was not to be expected that the bold declaration at Sanquhar, followed as it was by the trial of swords at Aird's Moss, would lead immediately to any relaxation in the severity of the then Government. On the contrary: it acted as a challenge to the party in power to stand or fall by their usurped authority; and though reasons of policy, and some lingering feelings of humanity might have led to some relaxation of the severe laws against the field preachers, it would have sounded as a complete surrender if they had received coolly the public denunciation of the head of the party as a traitor and an usurper. High treason was written so plainly in the face of the Sanquhar declaration, that no subtlety of legal logic was necessary to substantiate the charge. Accordingly the persecution against which Cameron's voice had

so stoutly protested raged only the more fiercely during the five years that intervened between the date of the declaration and the succession of James II. The bloody work now went on in a grander and more epic style, so much so, indeed, that the years that took their start from Sanquhar on to the Revolution, in the annals of the pious sufferers, appear as "the killing times." Two innocent women were seized and tied to a stake, on the Galloway shore, till they were smothered in the advancing tide; and among the wild hills of Muirkirk, which separate Ayrshire from Lanarkshire, at a place called Priesthill, a poor carrier was dragged forth and shot down by Claverhouse (a service utterly unworthy of a gallant soldier). This was in May 1685; and Charles had died in January of the same year with the blessing of a gracious Popish confessor at his bedside. His successor, James II., was an open and avowed servant of the Roman Pope from the beginning to the end of his brief career; and as such, though he could not be expected to be less murderous than his predecessor, he was certainly more honest. As a Papist, believing in a God-stamped infallibility in the head of his Church, he was as much bound to bring down the curse of God upon the head of a heretic as the Board of Public Health would be bound to visit with the heaviest penalty of the law a chemist who should sell a compound of arsenic or any other poison for a medicinal drug. But this openness and consistency of

his Popish profession, while it cleared his own conscience, in prosecuting the work of State murder initiated by his sacerdotal predecessors, did not render him less severe in the administration of their legacy; and if he did assume a certain air of toleration in some details of the intolerant programme, there can be no doubt it was only as a matter of policy to lull suspicion till the hour should come for doing what he considered his duty to the Mother Church. But with all wise precautions, and with the loyal acceptance which his reign found from a kindly people at his first start, he was too honest a man to play with the English Church such a game of lies as his worthless brother had played with Scotland at Scone. For three years after his accession, he stood unveiled before the people as a plotter against the Protestant Church of the country; and accordingly he received in no doubtful terms an intimation from the highest authorities that his services were no longer required on a Protestant throne; thereupon he wisely took ship for France, whence he never returned, except to show fight for a single unlucky hour at Boyne in the north of Ireland; thence to leave a Protestant throne for ever to a Protestant people, and die peaceably a few years afterwards at Paris amid the prayers and penances of his beloved Popery. But, though English Protestantism thus happily got rid of its tormentor, Scottish piety, for three long years after the accession of the Popish king, had to endure all the

sorrows which rent her heart under the Episcopal tyranny to which he had succeeded.

For the Cameronians and those who, under the name of associated societies, had sworn to his principles, there could be no quarter; and with two of the most noted names of the last ten years of the fifty years' struggle, we must conclude our roll of covenanted martyrs. These were Alexander Peden, commonly known as Peden the Prophet, and James Renwick. The former of these, the son of a small proprietor in the north of Ayrshire, born in 1626, had been appointed, shortly after the restoration of Charles II., to the parish of Glenluce, Galloway; but being a stout Presbyterian, and accustomed to use that freedom of speech which Martin Luther used to the German Emperor at Augsburg, and our brave Knox to Queen Mary at Holyrood, he retired thence immediately on the proclamation of the Drunken Parliament in Glasgow, 1661, and left his curse behind. After that he became an outlaw and a fugitive, and wandered from one homeless haunt to another, now in Scotland and now in Ireland, till in the year 1673, when residing with a friend in Lanark, he was apprehended and sentenced to imprisonment in the Bass Rock. There he remained for five years; and then, along with sixty other pious prisoners, he was sent off in a ship from Leith to London, thence to proceed to America in a state of perpetual banishment from his native country. By good fortune, however, the men in power at

that time in London were seized with a fit of human kindness, and liberated Peden with all his fifty fugitives wholesale. Peden then returned to his native country and followed his calling there, in England and in Ireland, like the Apostle Paul, as an itinerant preacher and prophet till he died, worn out with years and trials, on his own bed in his own parish of Sorn. How then was he a martyr? Men may suffer martyrdom in the trials of a persecuted life as well as on the scaffold; but the singular thing in the case of Peden was that, though he died peacefully in his bed, the brutal soldiery, whose office it was to perform the legalised butcheries of those tyrannical times, actually came to the ground where he was buried, forty days after his death, and digging up the body from the grave, marched off with it to the Gallows Hill at Cumnock, and gibbeted him there as they would have done a living malefactor. This act alone, had there been none other, would have sufficed to stamp with eternal infamy the men who, for a period of fifty years, in the name of Christ's gospel of love and peace, trampled in hatred and in blood on the heads of the noblest assertors of our Christian nationality.

The next name that crowns the procession of our Presbyterian martyrs is James Renwick. Renwick was the son of an excellent man, a weaver in the pleasant village of Minniehive, in Nithsdale, and being an only son was brought up with all the pious care and intelligent training that was to be expected from

a godly and intelligent mother. As a boy he was remarkably precocious; a great reader on all subjects, and a serious thinker on the most important of all subjects, his relation to his Maker. His talents being taken note of by some persons of means, he was sent to the university, where he was prevented from taking his degree by the oaths which, under the Stuart despotism, all graduands were called upon to swear. Renwick had been a witness to the execution of the famous covenanting preacher, Donald Cargill, in Edinburgh, which followed shortly after that of Cameron; and having, though a young man of less than twenty years, joined himself from deep conviction and decided resolve to the associated societies which, after the death of Cameron, formed themselves into a sacred union in defence of free Bible-reading and free preaching in Scotland, he could not conscientiously take the oath of supremacy with which the young academicians of the time were juggled into the gilded servitude of an unprincipled Government. He had also been present at the deathbed of Peden in 1685; and so stood forward as an evangelist of a pure Bible gospel, completely equipped, no less by his external surroundings, than by the conscientious seriousness of his own character, and the charm of his engaging and attractive presence. Like Cameron, and other preachers in those unkindly times, he had been obliged to seek in Holland for the higher education which no independent Presbyterian thinker could receive

at home. After returning to Scotland he spent his time in wandering from place to place, preaching a free gospel in wild unhaunted glens, to escape from the murderous watch of the minions of Popish James. I remember some three or four years ago, when my summer quarters were in the vicinity of St. Mary's Loch, starting from the classical harbourage of Tibbie Shiels, and after a tramp of a few miles southward on the road to Hawick, planting my foot on the ground of the lonely dell where this noble young evangelist preached his last sermon on his way northward, towards the close of the year 1687. Thence he proceeded through Peebles and Edinburgh to Fife, and thence back to Edinburgh, where he was snapped up by the spies of the Government, and handed over, as all the flower of the country were in those days, without shame or remorse, to the public hangman. On the 17th February 1688, he stood on the scaffold in the Grassmarket, the last of the sacred procession of martyrs for liberty of conscience, of whom Scotland has even more just cause to be proud than of those brave men who fought with Robert Bruce at Bannockburn and with Wallace at Stirling Bridge; and I shall readily be pardoned, as a leal Scot, if I here drop my prose and conclude with some lines which flowed from my pen, when treading the ground made sacred by our covenanting forefathers, some thirty years ago, more naturally and more justly than the glories of any Roman Zama or Greek Marathon could inspire.

The faithful people loved him. From green Ayr,
Nithsdale, Glencairn, Sanquhar, and founts of Ken,
Free pilgrim feet o'er perilous pathways fare,
To hear young Renwick preach in treeless glen ;
And mothers bring their new-born babes, to bear
Baptismal blessings from his touch ; and when
Fearless he flings the glowing word abroad,
Full many a noble soul is winged with fire from God.

Yet must he die ! The fangs of Law are keen ;
False Law, the smooth pretender of the Right,
That still to knaves a sharp-edged tool hath been,
To give a fair name to usurping Might !
By Law round noble Hamilton, I ween,
The faggot blazed to feed proud Beaton's spite ;
And now when Scotland's best, to please the Pope
And Romish James, must die—'tis Law that knots the rope !

Let loose your hounds, cold-blooded lawyers ! pay
The knave to trap the saint ! Your work is done.
Young Renwick falls, to venal spies a prey,
And lawless Law kills Scotland's purest son.
The grey Grassmarket heard him preach to-day,
On the red scaffold's floor. His race is run.
Now kings and priests, with brave light-hearted joy,
May drain their cups, nor fear that bold truth-speaking boy !

Weep, Scotland, weep !. but only for a day ;
Frail stands the throne, whose props are glued with gore ;

For a short hour the godless man holds sway,
And Justice whets her knife at Murder's door.
Weep, Scotland ! but let noble Pride this day
Beam through thine eye with sorrow streaming o'er ;
For why ?—Thy Renwick's dead, whose noble crime
Gave Freedom's trumpet breath, an hour before the time !

THE END

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